

DIRECTIONS

FOR

Daily Communion

WITH

G O D.

I N

THREE DISCOURSES,

SHEWING

How to Begin, how to Spend,
and how to Close every Day
with God.

By *MATTHEW HENRY*,
Minister of the Gospel.

The Third Edition.

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TO THE
READER.

THE Two First of these Discourses was preach'd (that is, the Substance of them) at the Morning Lecture at Bednal-Green, the former, Aug. 13. the other, Aug. 21. 1712. The latter of them I was much importun'd to Publish by divers that heard it; which yet I then had no thoughts at all of doing, because in divers Practical Treatises, we have excellent Directions given, of the same Nature and Tendency, by better Hands than mine. But upon Second Thoughts I consider'd, that both those Sermons of beginning and spending the Day with God, put together, might perhaps be of some use to those into whose Hands those larger Treatises do not fall. And the Truth is, the Subject of them is of such a Nature, that if they may be of any use, they may be of general and lasting use; whereupon I entertain'd the Thought of writing them over, with very large Additions throughout, as God should enable me, for the Press. Communicating this Thought to some of my Friends, they very much encourag'd me to proceed in it, but advis'd me to add a Third Discourse of closing the Day with God, which I thereupon took for my Subject at an Evening Lecture, Sept. 3. and have likewise much enlarg'd and alter'd that. And so this came to be what it is.

To the Reader.

I am not without Hopes, that something may hereby be contributed among plain People, by the Blessing of God upon the Endeavour, and the working of his Grace with it, to the promoting of serious Godliness, which is the Thing I aim at. And yet I confess I had not publish'd it, but designing it for a Present to my dearly beloved Friends in the Country, whom I have lately been rent from.

And to them with the most tender Affection, and most sincere Respects I Dedicate it, as a Testimony of my abiding Concern for their spiritual Welfare; hoping and praying, that their Conversation may be in every thing as becomes the Gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see them, or else be absent, I may hear comfortably of their Affairs, that they stand fast in one Spirit with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel. I am

Their Cordial and Affectionate

Sep. 8. 1712.

Well wisher,

Mat. Henry

THE
First Discourse.

S H E W I N G
How to Begin every Day with
G O D.

PSALM V. *ni.*

*My Voice shalt thou hear in the Morning.
O Lord, in the Morning will I direct
my Prayer unto thee, and will look up.*

Y O U would think it a *rude* Question,
if I should ask you, and yet I must in-
treat you seriously to ask your selves,
What brings you hither so early this
Morning? And *what is your Business here?*
Whenever we are attending on God in Ho-
ly Ordinances (nay, where-ever we are) we
should be able to give a good Answer to the Que-
stion which God put to the Prophet, *What dost*
thou here, Elijah? As when we return from Holy
Ordinances, we should be able to give a good An-
swer to the Question, which Christ put to those

6 *How to Begin the Day with God.*

that attended on *John Baptist's* Ministry, *What ment ye out into the Wilderiness to see?*

It is surprizing to see so many got together here; surely *the Fields are white unto the Harvest*; and I am willing to hope, it is not meerly for a *Walk* this *pleasant Morning*, that you are come hither; or for *Curiosity*, because the *Morning Lecture* was never *here* before; that it is not for *Company*, or to meet your *Friends* here, but that you are come with a pious Design to give *Glory* to God, and to receive *Grace* from him, and in both to keep up your *Communion* with him. And if you ask us that are Ministers, what our *Business* is, we hope we can truly say, it is (as God shall enable us) to assist and further you herein. *Comest thou peaceably?* Said the Elders of *Bethlehem* to *Samuel*; and so perhaps you will say to us: to which we answer, as the Prophet did, *Peaceably*, we come to *Sacrifice unto the Lord*, and invite you to the *Sacrifice*.

While the *Lecture* continues with you, you have an Opportunity of more than doubling your *Morning Devotions*; besides your worshipping of God in Secret, and in your Families, which this must not supersede, or jumble out, you here call upon God's Name in the solemn Assembly; and it is as much your *Business* in all such Exercises to pray a Prayer together, as it is to hear a Sermon; and it is said, the Original of the Morning Exercise was a Meeting for Prayer, at the time when the Nation was groaning under the dreadful desolating Judgment of a Civil War. You have also an Opportunity of conversing with the Word of God; you have Precept upon Precept, and Line upon Line. O that as the Opportunity wakens you Morning by Morning, so (as the Prophet speaks) your Ears may be waken'd to hear as the Learned,
Ila, 50. 4. But

How to Begin the Day with God. 7

But this is not all ; we desire that such Impressions may be made upon you by this Cluster of Opportunities, as you may *always abide* under the Influence of ; that this Morning Lecture may leave you better dispos'd to *Morning Worship* ever after ; that these frequent Acts of Devotion may so confirm the *Habit* of it, as that from hence forward your daily Worship may become more *easy*, and if I may so say, in a manner *natural* to you.

For your Help herein, I would recommend to you Holy *David's* Example in the Text, who having resolv'd in general, *v. 2.* that he would *abound* in the Duty of Prayer, and *abide* by it, *unto thee will I pray*, here fixeth one proper Time for it, and that is the Morning ; *My Voice shalt thou hear in the Morning* ; not in the Morning only, *David* solemnly address'd himself to the Duty of Prayer *three times a Day*, as *Daniel* did ; *Morning and Evening, and at Noon will I pray, and cry aloud*, *Psalms 55. 17.* Nay, he doth not think that enough, but *Seven Times a Day will I praise thee*, *Psalms 119. 164.* But particularly *in the Morning.*

Doct. It is our Wisdom and Duty, to *begin every Day with God.*

Let us observe in the Text.

1. The Good Work it self that we are to do God must *hear our Voice*, we must *direct our Prayer* to him, and we must *look up*.

2. The special Time appointed, and observ'd for the doing of this Good Work ; and that is *in the Morning*, and again *in the Morning*, that is, every Morning, as duly as the Morning comes.

8 *How to Begin the Day with God.*

For the First, The Good Work which by the Example of *David* we are here taught to do, is in one Word to pray; a Duty *dictated* by the Light and Law of Nature, which plainly and loudly speaks, *Should not a People seek unto their God?* But which the Gospel of Christ gives us much better *Instructions* in and *Encouragements* to, than any that Nature furnisheth us with, for it tells us *what* we must pray for, in *whose* Name we must pray, and by whose *Assistance*, and invites us to *come boldly to the Throne of Grace*, and to *enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus*. This Work we are to do not on the *Morning only*, but at other Times, at all Times; we read of Preaching the Word *out of season*, but we do not read of Praying *out of season*, for that's never out of season; the Throne of Grace is *always open*, and humble Supplicants are always welcome, and cannot come *unseasonably*.

But let us see how *David* here expresseth his pious Resolution to abide by this Duty.

1. *My Voice shalt thou hear.* Two ways *David* may here be understood. Either,

1. As *promising himself a gracious Acceptance with God*. Thou shalt, i. e. thou wilt hear my Voice, when in the Morning I direct my Prayer to thee; so it is the Language of his Faith, grounded upon God's Promise, that his Ear shall be always open to his Peoples Cry. He had pray'd, v. 1. Give ear to my Words, O Lord; and v. 2. Hearken unto the Voice of my Cry; and here he receives an Answer to that Prayer, thou wilt hear, I doubt not but thou wilt; and tho' I have not presently a Grant of the Thing I pray'd for, yet I am sure my Prayer is heard, is accepted, and comes up for a Memorial, as the Prayer of *Cornelius* did; 'tis put upon the File, and shall not be forgotten. If

we

How to Begin the Day with God. 9

we look *inward*, and can say by Experience that God has prepar'd *our Heart*, we may look *upward*, may look *forward*, and say with Confidence that he will *cause his Ear to hear*.

We may be sure of this, and we must pray in the Assurance of it, in a full Assurance of this Faith, that where-ever God finds a *praying Heart*, he will be found a *Prayer-hearing God*; tho' the Voice of Prayer be a *low Voice*, a *weak Voice* yet if it come from an upright Heart, it is a Voice that God will *hear*, that he will hear with Pleasure, 'tis *his Delight*, and that he will return a gracious Answer to; he hath *heard thy Prayers*, he hath *seen thy Tears*. When therefore we stand praying, this Ground we must stand upon, this Principle we must stand to, nothing doubting, nothing wavering, that *whatever we ask of God as a Father, in the Name of Jesus Christ the Mediator, according to the Will of God* revealed in the Scripture, it shall be granted us either in *kind or kindness*; to the Promise is, *John 16. 23.* and the Truth of it is seal'd to by the concurring Experience of the Saints in all Ages, ever since Men began to call upon the Name of the Lord, that *Jacob's God* never yet said to *Jacob's Seed*, *Seek ye me in vain*, and he will not begin now. When we come to God by Prayer, if we come aright we may be confident of this, that notwithstanding the Distance between Heaven and Earth, and our great Unworthiness to have any Notice taken of us, or any Favour shew'd us; yet God doth *bear our Voice*, and will not *turn away our Prayer*, or *his Mercy*. Or,

2. It is rather to be taken, as *David's* promising God a constant Attendance on him, in the way he has appointed. *My Voice shalt thou hear, i. e. I will speak to thee; Because thou hast inclined*

10 *How to Begin the Day with God.*

clined thine Ear unto me many a time, therefore I have taken up a Resolution to call upon thee at all times, even to the end of my time. Not a Day shall pass, but thou shalt be sure to *hear from me*. Not that *the Voice* is the thing that God regards, as they seem'd to think, who in Prayer *made their Voice to be heard on high*, Isa. 58. 4. *Hannah* pray'd and prevail'd, when *her Voice was not heard*; but it is the *Voice* of the Heart that is here meant; God said to *Moses*, *Wherefore criest thou unto me*, when we do not find that he said one Word, *Exod.* 14. 15. Praying is *lifting up the Soul* to God, and *pouring out the Heart* before him; yet as far as the expressing of the Devout Affections of the Heart by *Words* may be of use to fix the Thoughts, and to excite and quicken the Desires, 'tis good to draw near to God, not only *with a pure Heart*, but *with a humble Voice*; so must we render the *Catves* of our Lips.

However, God understands the *Language of the Heart*, and that's the Language in which we must *speak to God*; *David* prays here, v. 1. not only *give Ear to my Words*, but *consider my Meditation*, and *Psal'm* 19. 14. *Let the Words of my Mouth*, proceeding from *the Meditation of my Heart*, be *acceptable in thy sight*.

This therefore we have to do in every Prayer, we must *speak to God*; we must *write to him*; we say we *hear from a Friend* whom we receive a Letter from; we must see to it that God *hear from us* daily.

1. He *expects and requires it*. Tho' he has no need of us or our Services, nor can be benefited by them, yet he has oblig'd us to *offer the Sacrifice of Prayer and Praise to him continually*.

(1.) Thus

How to Begin the Day with God. II

(1.) Thus he will *keep up his Authority over us* and *keep us continually in mind* of our Subjection to him, which we are apt to forget. He requires that by Prayer we solemnly *pay our Homage* to him, and give Honour to his Name, that by this *Act and Deed* of our own, thus frequently repeated, we may strengthen the Obligations we lie under to *observe his Statutes* and *keep his Laws*, and be more and more sensible of the weight of them. *He is thy Lord, and worship thou him*, that by frequent humble Adorations of his Perfections, thou mayst make a constant humble Compliance with his Will the more easie to thee. By doing Obeisance, we are learning Obedience.

(2.) Thus he will testify his Love and Compassion towards us. It would have been an abundant Evidence of his Concern for us, and his Goodness to us if he had only said, *Let me hear from you as often as there is occasion*; call upon me in the Time of Trouble or Want, and that's enough; but to shew his Complacency in us, as a Father doth his Affection to his Child when he is sending him abroad, he gives us this Charge, *Let me hear from you every Day*, by every Post, though you have no particular Business; which shews, that the Prayer of the Upright is his Delight; 'tis Musick in his Ears; Christ saith to his Dove, *Let me see thy Countenance, let me hear thy Voice, for sweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comely*, Cant. 2. 14. And it is to the Spouse the Church, that Christ speaks in the Close of that Song of Songs, *O thou that dwellest in the Gardens* (in the Original 'tis Feminine) *the Companions hearken to thy Voice, cause me to hear it*. What a shame is this to us, that God is more willing to be pray'd to, and more ready

12 *How to Begin the Day with God.*

to hear *Prayer*, than we are to pray.

2. *We have something to say to God every Day.* Many are not sensible of this, and it is their Sin and Misery; they live without God in the World, they think they can live without him, are not sensible of their Dependance upon him, and their Obligations to him, and therefore for their parts they have nothing to say to him, he never hears from them, no more than the Father did from his Prodigal Son, when he was upon the Ramble, from one Weeks End to another. They ask scornfully, *What can the Almighty do for them?* And then no marvel if they ask next, *What Profit shall we have if we pray unto him?* And the Result is, they say to the Almighty, *Depart from us,* and so shall their Doom be. But I hope better Things of you, my Brethren, and that you are not of those who cast off Fear, and restrain Prayer before God, you are all ready to own that there is a great deal that the Almighty can do for you, and that there is Profit in praying to him, and therefore resolve to draw nigh to God, that he may draw nigh to you.

We have something to say to God daily.

(1.) As to a Friend we love and have Freedom with; such a Friend we cannot go by without calling on, and never want something to say to, tho' we have no particular Business with him; to such a Friend we unbosom our selves, we profess our Love and Esteem, and with Pleasure communicate our Thoughts; Abraham is call'd the Friend of God, and this Honour have all the Saints, I have not called you Servants, (saith Christ) but Friends; his Secret is with the Righteous; we are invited to acquaint our selves with him, and to walk with him, as one Friend walks with another; the Fellowship of Believers is said to be with the Father, and with his

How to Begin the Day with God. 13

his Son Jesus Christ ; and have we nothing to say to him then ?

Is it not errand enough to the Throne of his Grace to *admire* his Infinite Perfections, which we can never fully *comprehend*, and yet never sufficiently *contemplate*, and take *Complacency* in ? To please our selves in beholding the *Beauty of the Lord*, and giving him *the Glory due to his Name* ? Have we not a great deal to say to him in Acknowledgment of his condescending Grace and Favour to us, in *manifesting himself to us and not to the World* ; and in profession of our Affection and Submission to him ; Lord *thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.*

God hath something to say to us as a Friend every Day, by the written Word, in which we must *hear his Voice*, by his Providences, and by our own Consciences, and he *hearkens and hears* whether we have any thing to say to him by way of Reply, and we are very *unfriendly* if we have not. When he saith to us, *Seek ye my Face*, should not our Hearts answer as to one we love, *Thy Face, Lord, will we seek.* When he saith to us, *Return ye backsliding Children*, should not we readily reply, *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* If he speak to us by way of Conviction and Reproof, ought not we to return an Answer by way of Confession and Submission. If he speak to us by way of Comfort, ought not we to reply in Praise ? If you love God, you cannot be to seek for something to say to him, something for your Hearts to *pour out before him*, which his Grace has already put there.

(2.) As to a Master we serve, and have *Business with.* Think how numerous and important the Concerns are that lie between us and God, and you will readily acknowledge that you have

14 *How to Begin the Day with God.*

a great deal to *say to him*. We have a constant Dependance upon him, all our *Expectation is from him*; we have constant Dealings with him; he is the God *with whom we have to do*, Heb. 4. 13.

Do we not know that *our Happiness is bound up in his Favour*; 'tis *Life*, the Life of our Souls, 'tis *better than Life*, than the Life of our Bodies? And have we not Business with God to seek his Favour, to *intreat it with our whole Hearts*, to beg as for our Lives that he would lift up the Light of his Countenance upon us, and to plead *Christ's Righteousness*, as that only through which we can hope to obtain God's Loving Kindness.

Do we not know that *we have offended God*, that by Sin we have made our selves *obnoxious* to his Wrath and Curse, and that we are daily *contracting Guilt*? And have we not then Business enough with him to confess our Fault and Folly, to ask for Pardon in the Blood of Christ, and in him *who is our Peace* to make our Peace with God, and renew our Covenants with him in his own Strength to *go and sin no more*?

Do we not know that *we have daily Work to do for God*, and our own Souls, the *Work of the Day* that is to be done *in its Day*? And have we not then Business with God to beg of him to *shew us* what he would have us do, to *direct us* in it, and *strengthen us* for it? To seek to him for Assistance and Acceptance, that he will *work in us both to will and to do that which is good*, and then countenance and own his own Work? Such Business as this the Servant has with his Master.

Do we not know that we are *continually in Danger*? Our Bodies are so, and their Lives and Comforts, we are continually surrounded with Diseases and Deaths, whose Arrows fly at Mid-night,

How to Begin the Day with God. 15

night, and at Noon-day; and have we not then *Business with God* going out and coming in, lying down, and rising up, to *put our selves* under the Protections of *his Providence*, to be the Charge of his Holy Angels? Our Souls much more are so, and their Lives and Comforts; 'tis those our *Adversary the Devil*, a strong and subtle Adversary, wars against, and *seeks to devour*; and have we not then *Business with God* to *put our selves* under the Protection of *his Grace*, and clad our selves with *his Armour*, that we may be able to *stand against the Wiles and Violences of Satan*; so as we may neither be *surpriz'd* into Sin by a sudden Temptation, nor *over-power'd* by a strong one.

Do we not know that *we are dying daily*, that Death is *working in us*, and hastning towards us, and that Death *fetches us* to Judgment, and Judgment fixeth us in our everlasting State? And have we not then *something to say* to God in Preparation for what is before us. Shall we not say, Lord make us to know our End! Lord teach us to number our Days! Have we not *Business with God* to *judge our selves* that we may not be judged, and to see that our *Matters* be right and good.

Do we not know that *we are Members of that Body whereof Christ is the Head*, and are we not concern'd to approve our selves *living Members*? Have we not then *Business with God* upon the publick Account to make Intercession for his Church? Have we nothing to say for *Zion*? Nothing in behalf of *Jerusalem's ruin'd Walls*? Nothing for the Peace and Welfare of the Land of our Nativity? Are we not *of the Family*, or but *Babes in it*, that we concern not our selves in the Concerns of it?

Have we no *Relations*, no *Friends* that are dear to us, whose Joys and Grievs we *share in*? and have

16 *How to Begin the Day with God.*

have we nothing to say to God for *them*? No Complaints to make, no Requests to make known? Are none of them sick or in distress? None of them tempted or disconsolate? And have we not Errands, at the Throne of Grace, to beg Relief and Succour for them?

Now lay all this together, and then consider whether you have not something to say to God every Day; and particularly in Days of Trouble, when *it is meet to be said unto God, I have born Chastisement*; and when if you have any Sense of things, *you will say unto God, Do not condemn me.*

3. If you have all this to say to God, *what should hinder you from saying it? from saying it every Day?* Why should not he hear your Voice, when you have so many Errands to him.

1. Let not *Distance* hinder you from saying it. You have occasion to speak with a Friend, but he is a *great way off*, you cannot reach him, you know not where to find him, nor how to get a Letter to him, and therefore your Business with him is *undone*; but this needs not keep you from speaking to God, for tho' it is true *God is in Heaven*, and we are *upon Earth*, yet he is *nigh* to his Praying People in *all that they call upon him for*; he *hears their Voice* where ever they are. *Out of the Depths I have cried unto thee*, saith David, Psal. 130. 1. *From the Ends of the Earth I will cry unto thee*, Psalm 61. 2. Nay, *Jonah* saith, *Out of the Belly of Hell* cried I, and thou *hearest my Voice*. In all Places we may find a way open Heavenward; *Undique ad Caelos tantundem est Via*; Thanks to him who by his own Blood has *consecrated for us a new and living way into the Holiest*, and settled a Correspondence between Heaven and Earth.

2. Let

How to Begin the Day with God. 17

2. Let not *Fear* hinder you from saying what you have to say to God. You have Business with a *Great Man* it may be, but he is so far above you, or so stern and severe towards all his Inferiors, that you are afraid to speak to him, and you have none to introduce you, or speak a good Word for you, and therefore you chuse rather to drop your Cause; but there is no occasion for your being thus discourag'd in speaking to God; you may come boldly to the Throne of his Grace, you have there a *παρρησία*, a *Liberty of Speech*; leave to pour out your whole Souls. And such are his Compassions to humble Supplicants, that even his Terror need not make them afraid. It is against the Mind of God that you should frighten your selves, he would have you encourage your selves, for you have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of Adoption, by which you are brought into this among other the glorious Liberties of the Children of God. Nor is this all, we have one to introduce us, and to speak for us, an Advocate with the Father. Did ever Children need an Advocate with a Father? But that by those two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong Consolation, we have not only the Relation of a Father to depend upon, but the Interest and Intercession of an Advocate; a High Priest over the House of God, in whose Name we have Access with Confidence

3. Let not his knowing what your Business is, and what you have to say to him hinder you, you have Business with such a Friend, but you think you need not put your selves to any Trouble about it, for he is already appriz'd of it; he knows what you want, and what you desire, and therefore tis no matter for speaking to him, it is true all your Desire is before God, he knows your Wants and
Bur-

18 *How to Begin the Day with God.*

Burthens, but he will know them *from you* ; he hath promis'd you Relief, but his Promise must be put in Suit, and *he will for this be enquir'd of by the House of Israel* to do it for them. *Ezek. 36. 37.* Tho' we cannot by our Prayers *give him any Information*, yet we must by our Prayers *give him Honour*. 'Tis true, nothing we can say can have any Influence upon *him*, or *move him* to shew us Mercy, but it may have an Influence upon *our selves*, and help to put us into a Frame fit to receive Mercy. It is a very easy and reasonable Condition of his Favours, *Ask and it shall be given you*. It was to teach us the Necessity of *Praying*, in order to our *receiving Favour*, that Christ put that strange Question to the blind Men, *What would ye that I should do unto you ?* He knew what they would have, but those that touch the Top of the Golden Sceptre must be ready to tell, *What is their Petition*, and *what is their Request ?*

4. Let not *any other Business* hinder our saying what we have to say to God. We have *Business* with a Friend perhaps, but we cannot do it, because we *have not leisure* ; we have something else to do, which we think more needful ; but we cannot say so concerning the Business we have to do with God ; for that is without doubt the *one thing needful*, to which every thing else must be made to *truckle and give way*. It is not at all necessary to our Happiness that we be *great* in the World, or *raise Estates* to such a Pitch. But it is absolutely necessary that we *make our Peace with God*, that we obtain his Favour, and *keep our selves with his Love*. Therefore no Business for the World will serve to *excuse* our Attendance upon God ; but on the contrary, the more *important* our worldly Business is, the more need we have to apply our selves to God by Prayer for his Blessing

How to Begin the Day with God. 19

sing upon it, and so take him along with us in it. The closer we keep to Prayer, and to God in Prayer, the more will all our Affairs prosper.

Shall I prevail with you now to let God frequently *hear from you* ; let him *hear your Voice*, tho' it be but *the Voice of your Breathing*, (Lam. 3. 56.) that's a Sign of Life ; tho' it be the Voice of your *Groanings*, and those so weak that they *cannot be utter'd*, Rom. 8. 26, Speak to him, tho' it be in broken Language, as *Hezekiah* did ; *Like a Crane or a Swallow so did I chatter*, Isa. 38, 14. Speak often to him ; he is always within hearing. Hear him *speaking to you*, and have an eye to that in every thing you *say to him* : as when you write an Answer to a Letter of Business you *lay it before you* ; God's Word must be the *Guide of your Desires*, and the *Ground of your Expectations* in Prayer : nor can you expect he should give a *gracious Ear* to what you say to him, if you turn a *deaf Ear* to what he saith to you.

You see you have frequent Occasion to *speack with God*, and therefore are concern'd to *grow* in your Acquaintance with him, to take heed of doing any thing to *displease* him ; and to *strengthen your Interest* in the Lord Jesus, through whom alone it is that you have *Access with Boldness* to him. Keep your Voice *in tune* for Prayer, and let all your Language be a *pure Language*, that you may be fit to *call on the Name of the Lord*, Zeph. 3. 9. And in every Prayer remember you are *speaking to God*, and make it to appear you have an Awe of him upon your Spirits ; let us not be *rash with our Mouth*, nor *hasty to utter any thing before God*, but let every Word be well weigh'd, because *God is in Heaven, and we upon Earth*, Eccl. 5. 2. And if he had not invited and encourag'd us to

20 *How to Begin the Day with God.*

to do it, it had been *unpardonable* Presumption for such sinful Wornas as we are to *speak to the Lord of Glory*, Gen. 18. 17. And we are concern'd to *speak from the Heart, heartily*, for it is for our Lives, and for the Lives of our Souls that we are speaking to him.

2. We must *direct our Prayer unto God*. He must not only *hear our Voice*, but we must with Deliberation and Design address our selves to him. In the Original 'tis no more but *I will direct unto thee*; it might be supplied, *I will direct my Soul unto thee*, agreeing with Psalm 25. 1. *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my Soul*. Or, *I will direct my Affections to thee*; having set my Love upon thee, *I will let out my Love to thee*. Our Translation supplies it very well, *I will direct my Prayer unto thee*. That is,

1. When I pray to thee I will *direct my Prayers*; and then it notes a *Fixedness of Thoughts*, and a *close Application of Mind*, to the Duty of Prayer. We must go about it *solemnly*, as those that have something of moment much *at Heart*, and much in view therein, and therefore dare not trifle in it. When we go to pray we must not give the *Sacrifice of Fools* that think not either what's to be done, or what's to be gain'd, but speak the *Words of the Wise*, who aim at some good End in what they say, and suit it to that End, we must have in our Eye *God's Glory*, and our own *true Happiness*; and so well order'd is the Covenant of Grace, that God has been pleas'd therein to *twist Interests* with us, so that in seeking his Glory, we really and effectually seek our own true Interests. This is *directing the Prayer*, as he that shoots an Arrow at a Mark *directs* it, and with a fixed Eye and steddy Hand *takes Aim aright*. This is *engaging the Heart to approach to God*, and in order to that
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How to Begin the Day with God. 21

disengaging it from every thing else. He that takes aim with *one Eye*, shuts *the other* ; if we would direct a Prayer to God, we must look off all other things, must gather in our wandring Thoughts, must summon them all to draw near and give their Attendance, for here is Work to be done that needs them all, and is well worthy of them all ; thus we must be able to say with the Psalmist, O God, *my Heart is fixed, my Heart is fixed.*

2. When I direct my Prayer, I will direct it to thee. And so it speaks,

1. The Sincerity of our Habitual Intention in Prayer. We must not direct our Prayer to Men, that we may gain Praise and Applause with them, as the *Pharisees* did, who proclaimed their Devotions as they did their Alms, that they might gain a Reputation, which they knew how to make a Hand of ; Verily they have their Reward, Men commend them, but God abhors their Pride and Hypocrisy. We must not let our Prayers run at large, as they did that said, *Who will shew us any good ?* Nor direct them to the World, courting its Smiles, and pursuing its Wealth, as those that are therefore said not to cry unto God with their Hearts, because they assembled themselves for Corn and Wine, *Hos. 7. 14.* Let not Self, carnal Self be the Spring and Centre of your Prayers, but God ; let the Eye of the Soul be fix'd upon him as your highest End in your Applications to him ; let this be the habitual Disposition of your Souls, to be to your God for a Name and a Praise ; and let this be your Design in all your Desires, that God may be glorified, and by this let them all be directed, determin'd, sanctified, and when need is, over-ru'd. Our Saviour hath plainly taught us this, in the first Petition of the Lord's Prayer ; which

22 *How to Begin the Day with God.*

which is, *hallowed be thy Name* : In that we fix our End, and other things are desir'd in order to that ; in that the Prayer is directed to the Glory of God, in all that whereby he has made himself known, the Glory of his Holiness, and it is with an Eye to the sanctifying of his Name, that we desire his Kingdom may come, and his Will be done, and that we may be fed, and kept, and pardon'd. An Habitual Aim at God's Glory is that Sincerity which is our Gospel-Perfection, that Single Eye, which where it is, the whole Body, the whole Soul is full of Light. Thus the Prayer is directed to God.

2. It speaks the Steadiness of our actual Regard to God in Prayer. We must direct our Prayer to God, that is, we must continually think of him, as one with whom we have to do in Prayer. We must direct our Prayer, as we direct our Speech to the Person we have Business with. The Bible is a Letter God hath sent to us, Prayer is a Letter we send to him ; now you know it is essential to a Letter that it be directed, and material that it be directed right ; if it be not, 'tis in danger of miscarrying ; which may be of ill Consequence ; you pray daily, and therein send Letters to God ; you know not what you lose, if your Letters miscarry : will you therefore take Instructions how to direct to him.

1. Give him his Titles, as you do, when you direct to a Person of Honour ; address your selves to him as the Great Jehovah, God over all, Blessed for evermore ; the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords ; as the Lord God gracious and merciful ; let your Hearts and Mouths be fill'd with holy Adorings and Admirings of him, and fasten upon those Titles of his, which are proper to strike a holy Awe of him upon your Minds, that you may worship

How to Begin the Day with God. 23

worship him with Reverence and godly Fear. Direct your Prayer to him as the God of Glory, with whom is terrible Majesty, and whole Greatness is unsearchable, that you may not dare to trifle with him, or to mock him in what you say to him.

2. Take notice of your Relation to him, as his Children, and let not that be over-look'd and lost in your awful Adorations of his Glories. I have been told of a good Man, among whose Experiences, which he kept a Record of, after his Death, this among other things was found; that such a time in Secret Prayer, his Heart at the Beginning of the Duty was much enlarg'd, in giving to God those Titles which are awful and tremendous, in calling him the Great, the Mighty, and the Terrible God, but going on thus, he check'd himself with this Thought, *And why not My Father?* Christ hath both by his Precept and by his Pattern taught us to address our selves to God as *Our Father*; and the Spirit of Adoption teacheth us to cry *Abba, Father*; a Son, tho' a Prodigal, when he returns and repents, may go to his Father, and say unto him, *Father, I have sinned*; and tho' no more worthy to be called a Son, yet humbly bold to call him Father. When Ephraim bemoans himself as a Bullock unaccustomed to the Yoke, God bemoans him as a dear Son, as a pleasant Child, Jer. 31. 18, 20. and if God is not ashamed, let not us be afraid to own the Relation.

3. Direct your Prayer to him in Heaven; this our Saviour has taught us in the Preface to the Lord's Prayer, *Our Father which art in Heaven*. Not that he is confin'd to the Heavens, or as if the Heaven, or Heaven of Heavens could contain him, but there he is said to have prepar'd his Throne, not only his Throne of Government by which his Kingdom ruleth over all, but his Throne of Grace to which

24 *How to Begin the Day with God.*

which we must by Faith draw near. We must eye him as God in Heaven, in opposition to the Gods of the Heathen, which dwelt in Temples made with Hands. Heaven is a high Place, and we must address our selves to him as a God infinitely above us; 'tis the Fountain of Light, and to him we must address our selves as the Father of Lights; it is a Place of Prospect, and we must see his Eye upon us, from thence beholding all the Children of Men; it is a Place of Purity, and we must in Prayer eye him as a Holy God, and give Thanks at the Remembrance of his Holiness; it is the Firmament of his Power, and we must depend upon him as one to whom Power belongs. When our Lord Jesus pray'd he lift up his Eyes to Heaven, to direct us whence to expect the Blessings we need.

4. Direct this Letter to be left with the Lord Jesus, the only Mediator between God and Man; 'twill certainly miscarry if it be not put into his Hand, who is that other Angel that puts much Incense to the Prayers of the Saints, and so perfum'd presents them to the Father, Rev. 8. 3. what we ask of the Father must be in his Name; what we expect from the Father must be by his Hand, for he is the High Priest of our Profession, that is ordain'd for Men, to offer their Gifts; Heb. 5. 1. Direct the Letter to be left with him, and he will deliver it with Care and Speed, and will make our Service acceptable. Mr. George Herbert in his Poem, call'd *The Bag*, having pathetically describ'd the Wound in Christ's Side as he was hanging on the Cross, makes him speak thus to all Believers as he was going to Heaven.

How to Begin every Day with God. 25

*If you have any thing to send or write,
I have no Bag, but here is room,
Unto my Father's Hands and Sight,
Believe me it shall safely come ;
That I shall mind what you impart,
Look, you may put it very near my Heart.
Or if hereafter any of my Friends
Will use me in this kind, the Door
Shall still be open, what he sends
I will present, and something more,
Not to his Hurt ; Sighs will convey
Any thing to me ; Hark, Despair, away,*

3. We must look up, That is,

1. We must look up in our Prayers, as those that speak to one above us, infinitely above us, the High and holy one that inhabiteth Eternity, as those that expect every good and perfect Gift to come from above, from the Father of Lights ; as those that desire in Prayer to enter into the Holiest, and to draw near with a true Heart. With an Eye of Faith we must look above the World and every thing in it, must look beyond the Things of Time ; what is this World, and all things here below, to one that knows how to put a due Estimate upon Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Things by Jesus Christ ? The Spirit of a Man at Death goes upward, Eccl. 3. 21. for it returns to God who gave it, and therefore as mindful of its Original, must in every Prayer look upwards, towards its God, towards its Home, as having set its Affections on things above, wherein it has laid up its Treasure. Let us therefore in Prayer lift up our Hearts with our Hands unto God in the Heavens, Jam. 3. 14. It was anciently usual in some Churches for the Minister to stir up the People to pray

B

with

26 *How to Begin every Day with God.*

with this Word, *Sursum Corda*, Up with your Hearts; unto thee, O Lord, do we lift up our Souls:

2. We must look up after our Prayers.

1. With an Eye of Satisfaction and Pleasure; looking up is a Sign of Chearfulness, as a Downlook is a melancholy one. We must look up as those that having by Prayer *referr'd our selves* to God, are easy and well-pleas'd, and with an entire Confidence in his Wisdom and Goodness patiently expect the Issue. Hannah, when she had pray'd, look'd up, look'd pleasant: She went her way, and did eat, and her Countenance was no more sad, 1 Sam. i. 18. Prayer is Hearts-Ease to a good Christian; and when we have pray'd, we should look up, as those that through Grace have found it so.

2. With an Eye of Observation, what Returns God makes to our Prayers. We must look up as one that has shot an Arrow looks after it to see how near it comes to the Mark; we must look within us, and observe what the Frame of our Spirits is after we have been at Prayer, how well satisfied they are in the Will of God, and how well dispos'd to accommodate themselves to it; we must look about us, and observe how Providence works concerning us, that if our Prayers be answer'd, we may return to give Thanks; if not, we may remove what hinders, and may continue waiting. Thus we must set our selves upon our Watch-tower to see what God will say unto us, Heb. 2. 1. and must be ready to hear it, Psal. 85. 8. expecting that God will give us an Answer of Peace, and resolving that we will return no more to Folly. Thus must we keep up our Communion with God; hoping that whenever we lift up our Hearts unto him, he will lift

How to Begin every Day with God. 27

up the Light of his Countenance upon us. Sometimes the Answer is quick, while they are yet speaking I will hear; quicker than the Return of any of your Posts, but if it be not, when we have pray'd we must wait.

Let us learn thus to *direct our Prayers*, and thus to *look up*; to be *inward with God* in every Duty, to make *Heart-Work* of it, or we make nothing of it. Let us not worship *in the outward Court*, when we are commanded and encouraged to enter within the Vail.

For the Second. The particular Time fix'd in the Text for this good Work, is *the Morning*; and the Psalmist seems to lay an Emphasis upon this in *the Morning*, and again in *the Morning*; not then only, but then to *begin with*: Let that be one of the *Hours of Prayer*. Under the Law we find that *every Morning* there was a Lamb offer'd in Sacrifice, *Exod. 29. 39.* and every Morning the Priests burn'd Incense, *Exod. 30. 7.* and the Singers stood *every Morning* to *thank the Lord*, *1 Chron. 23. 10.* And so it was appointed in *Ezekiel's Temple*, *Ezek. 46. 13, 14, 15.* By which an Intimation was plainly given, that the spiritual Sacrifices should be offer'd by the spiritual Priests *every Morning*, as duly as the Morning comes. Every Christian should pray in secret, and every Master of a Family with his Family *Morning by Morning*; and there is good Reason for it.

1: The Morning is the *first part of the Day*, and it is fit that he that is *the first* should have the first, and be *first serv'd*. The Heathen could say, *A Jove Principium*, whatever you do *begin with God*. The World had its Beginning from him, we had ours, and therefore whatever we begin, it concerns us to take him along with

28 *How to Begin every Day with God.*

us in it. The Days of our Life, as soon as ever the Sun of Reason riseth in the Soul, should be devoted to God, and employ'd in his Service; *From the Womb of the Morning let Christ have the Dew of the Youth*, Psal. 110. 3. The *First-Fruits* were always to be the Lord's, and the *Firstlings of the Flock*. By Morning and Evening Prayer we give Glory to him who is the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the First and the Last; with him we must *begin* and *end* the Day, *begin* and *end* the Night, who is the Beginning and the End, the *first Cause*, and the *last End*.

Wisdom hath said, *Those that seek me early shall find me*; early in their Lives, early in the Day; for hereby we give to God that which he ought to have, the *Preference above other things*. Hereby we shew that we are *in care* to please him, and to approve our selves to him, and that we seek him *diligently*. What we do *earnestly*, we are said in Scripture to do *early*, (as *Psal. 101. 8.*) Industrious Men *rise betimes*; David expresseth the Strength and Warmth of his Devotion, when he saith, *O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee*, Psal. 63. 1.

2. In the Morning we are *fresh and lively*, and in the *best Frame*. When our Spirits are reviv'd with the Rest and Sleep of the Night, and we live a kind of *new Life*; and the Fatigues of the Day before are forgotten; the God of Israel neither *slumbers nor sleeps*, yet when he exerts himself more than ordinary on his Peoples behalf, he is said to *awake as one out of sleep*, Psal. 78. 65. If ever we be good for any thing, it is in the Morning; it is therefore become a Proverb, *Aurora Musis Amica*; and if the Morning be a Friend to the Muses, I'm sure 'tis no less so to the Graces. As he that is the *First* should have the

How to Begin every Day with God. 29

the *First* : So he that is the *Best* should have the *Best* ; and then when we are *fittest* for Business, we should apply our selves to that which is the *most needful* Business.

Worshipping God is Work that *requires* the *best* Powers of the Soul, when they are *at the best* ; and it well *deserves* them ; how can they be better bestow'd, or so as to turn to a better Account ? Let *all that is within me bless his holy Name*, saith *David*, and all little enough. If there be any *Gift* in *us* by which God may be honour'd, the Morning is the most proper time to *stir it up*, (2 Tim. 1. 6.) when our Spirits are refresh'd, and have gain'd new Vigor : then *awake my Glory, awake Psalter and Harp*, for I my self will *awake early*, Psal. 57. 8. Then let us *stir up our selves to take hold on God*.

3. In the Morning we are *most free from Company and Business*, and ordinarily have the best Opportunity for Solitude and Retirement ; unless we be of those Sluggards that lie in Bed with yet a little Sleep, a little Slumber, till the Work of their Calling calls them up, with, *How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard ?* It is the Wisdom of those that have much to do in the world, that have scarce a Minute to themselves of all day, to *take time in the Morning* before Business crowds in upon them, for the Business of their Religion ; that they may be *intire* for it, and therefore the more *intent* upon it.

As we are concern'd to worship God, then when we are least burthen'd with *Deadness* and *Dulness* within, so also when we are least expos'd to *Distraction* and *Diversion* from without ; the Apostle intimates how much it should be our Care to *attend upon the Lord without Distraction*, 1. Cor. 7. 35. And therefore that *one Day in Seven*,

30 *How to Begin every Day with God.*

(and it is the first Day too, the Morning of the Week) which is appointed for *holy Work*, is appointed to be a Day of Rest from other Work: *Abraham* leaves all at the Bottom of the Hill, when he goes up into the Mount to worship God. In the Morning therefore let us converse with God, and apply our selves to the Concerns of the other Life, before we are *intangled in the Affairs of this Life*. Our Lord Jesus has set us an Example of this, who because his Day was wholly fill'd up with publick Business for God and the Souls of Men, *rose up in the Morning a great while before Day*, and before Company came in, and went out into a solitary Place, and there pray'd, Mar. 1. 35.

4. In the Morning we have received fresh Mercies from God, which we are concern'd to acknowledge with Thankfulness to his Praise. He is continually doing us good, and loading us with his Benefits. Every Day we have reason to bless him, for every Day he is blessing us; in the Morning particularly; and therefore as he is giving out to us the Fruits of his Favour, which are said to be new every Morning, Lam. 3. 23. because tho' the same that we had the Morning before, they are still forfeited, and still needed, and upon that account may be call'd still new; so we should be still returning the Expressions of our Gratitude to him, and of other pious and devout Affections, which like the Fire on the Altar must be new every Morning, Lev. 6. 12.

Have we had a good Night, and have we not an Errand to the Throne of Grace to return Thanks for it? How many Mercies concur'd to make it a good Night! Distinguishing Mercies granted to us, but deny'd to others; many have not where to lay their Heads; our Master himself had not; the

Foxes

How to Begin every Day with God. 37

Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head; but we have Houses to dwell in, quiet and peaceable Habitations, perhaps stately ones: We have Beds to lie in, warm and easy ones, perhaps Beds of Ivory, fine ones, such as they stretch'd themselves upon that were at ease in Zion; and are not put to wander in Desarts and Mountains, in Dens and Caves of the Earth, as some of the best of God's Saints have been forc'd to do, Of whom the World was not worthy. Many have Beds to lie on, yet dare not, or cannot lie down in them, being kept up either by the Sickness of their Friends, or the Fear of their Enemies. But we have laid us down, and there has been none to make us afraid; no Alarms of the Sword, either of War or Persecution. Many lay them down and cannot sleep, but are full of Tossing to and fro until the Dawning of the Day, through Pain of Body, or Anguish of Mind. Wearisome Nights are appointed to them, and their Eyes are held waking; but we have laid us down and slept without any Disturbance, and our Sleep was sweet and refreshing, the pleasant Parenthesis of our Cares and Toils; 'tis God that has given us sleep, has given it us as he gives it to his Beloved. Many lay them down and sleep, and never rise again; they sleep the Sleep of Death, and their Beds are their Graves; but we have slept and waked again, have rested, and are refreshed; we shake ourselves, and it is with us as at other times; because the Lord hath sustained us; and if he had not upheld us, we had sunk with our own Weight when we fell asleep, Psal. 3. 5.

Have we a pleasant Morning? Is the Light sweet to us, the Light of the Sun, the Light of the Eyes, do these rejoyce the Heart? and ought we

32 *How to Begin every Day with God.*

not to own our Obligations to him who opens our Eyes, and opens the Eye-lids of the Morning upon us. Have we Cloaths to put on in the Morning, *Garments* that are warm upon us, Job 37. 17. Change of Raiment, not for Necessity only, but for Ornament? We have them from God; 'tis *his Wool* and *his Flax*, that is given to cover our Nakedness, and the Morning when we dress our selves is the proper time of returning him Thanks for it; yet I doubt we do it not so constantly as we do for our Food when we sit down to our Tables, tho' we have as much reason to do it. Are we in Health and at Ease? Have we been long so? We ought to be as thankful for a constant *Series* of Mercies, as for particular *Instances* of it, especially considering how many are sick and in pain, and how much we have deserv'd to be so.

Perhaps we have experienc'd some special Mercy to our selves or our Families, in Preservation from Fire or Thieves, from Dangers we have been aware of, and many more unseen; *weeping* perhaps *endur'd for a Night*, and *Joy came in the Morning*, and that calls aloud upon us to own the Goodness of God. The *Destroying Angel* perhaps has been abroad, and the Arrow that *flies at Midnight*, and *wasteth in Darknes*, has been shot in at others Windows, but our Houses have been *passed over*, Thanks be to God for the Blood of the Covenant sprinkled upon our Door-Posts; and for the Ministration of the good Angels about us, to which we owe it that we have been preserv'd from the Malice of the evil Angels against us, those Rulers of the Darknes of this World, who perhaps *creep forth like the Beasts of Prey*, when *he maketh Darknes and it is dark*. All the Glory Be to the God of the Angels.

How to Begin every Day with God. 33

5. In the Morning we have *fresh Matter ministered to us for Adoration of the Greatness and Glory of God.* We ought to take notice not only of the Gifts of God's Bounty to us, which we have the Comfort and Benefit of, they are little narrow Souls that confine their Regards to them, but we ought to observe the more *general Instances* of his Wisdom and Power in the Kingdom of Providence which redound to his Honour, and the common Good of the Universe. The 19th *Psalms* seems to have been a *Morning Meditation*, in which we are directed to observe how the *Heavens declare the Glory of God*, and the *Firmament sheweth his Handy-work*; and to own not only the Advantage we receive from their Light and Influence, but the Honour they do to him who *stretched out the Heavens like a Curtain*, fix'd their Pillars, and established their Ordinances, according to which they *continue to this Day*, for they are all *his Servants.* *Day by Day utters this Speech*, and *Night unto Night sheweth this Knowledge*, even the *eternal Power and Godhead* of the great Creator of the World, and its great Ruler. The regular and constant Succession and Revolution of Light and Darkeness, according to the *Original Contract* made between them, that they should reign alternately, may serve to confirm our Faith, in that part of Divine Revelation which gives us the History of the Creation, and the Promise of God to Noah and his Sons, *Gen. 8. 22.* *His Covenant with the Day and with the Night,* *Jer. 33. 20.*

Look up in the Morning, and see how exactly the *Day-spring knows its place*, knows its time, and keeps them: How the Morning Light *takes hold of the ends of the Earth*, and of the Air, which is *turn'd to it as Clay to the Seal*, instantly receiving

34 *How to Begin every Day with God.*

the Impressions of it, *Job 38. 12, 13, 14.* I was pleas'd with an Expression of a worthy good Minister I heard lately, in his Thanksgivings to God for the Mercies of the Morning; *How many thousand Miles (said he) has the Sun travell'd this last Night to bring the Light of the Merning to us poor sinful Wretches,* that justly might have been buried in the Darknes of the Night. Look up and see the Sun *as a Bridegroom* richly dress'd, and hugely pleas'd, *coming out of his Chamber,* and rejoicing *as a strong Man to run a Race;* observe how bright his Beams are, how sweet his Smiles, how strong his Influences: And if there be *no Speech or Language where their Voice is not heard,* the Voice of these natural immortal Preachers, proclaiming the Glory of God, 'tis pity there should be any Speech or Language where the Voice of his Worshippers should not be heard, ecchoing to the Voice of those Preachers, and ascribing Glory to him who thus *makes the Morning and Evening to rejoyce:* But whatever others do, let him hear our Voice to this purpose *in the Morning,* and *in the Morning* let us direct our Praises unto him.

6. In the Morning *we have, or should have had fresh Thoughts of God,* and sweet Meditations on his Name, and those we ought to offer up to him in Prayer. Have we been, according to *David's Example,* *remembring God upon our Beds,* and *meditating upon him in the Night-watches?* When we awake, can we say as he did, *we are still with God?* If so, we have a good Errand to the Throne of Grace by the *Words of our Mouths,* to offer up to God the *Meditations of our Hearts,* and it will be to him a Sacrifice of a *sweet smelling savour.* If the Heart has been *enditing a good Matter,* let the Tongue be as the Pen of a ready Writer, to pour it out before God, *Psal. 45. 1.*

We

How to Begin every Day with God. 35

We have the Word of God to converse with, and we ought to read a Portion of it every Morning: By it God speaks to us, and in it we ought to meditate Day and Night, which if we do, that will send us to the Throne of Grace, and furnish us with many a good Errand there. If God in the Morning by his Grace direct his Word to us, so as to make it reach our Hearts, that will engage us to direct our Prayer to him.

7. In the Morning, it is to be fear'd, we find cause to reflect upon many vain and sinful Thoughts that have been in our Minds in the Night season; and upon that account 'tis necessary we address our selves to God by Prayer in the Morning, for the Pardon of them. The Lord's Prayer seems to be calculated primarily in the Letter of it for the Morning; for we are taught to pray for our daily Bread this Day: And yet we are then to pray, Father forgive us our Trespases; for as in the burry of the Day we contract Guilt by our irregular Words and Actions, so we do in the solitude of the Night by our corrupt Imaginations and the wandrings of an unsanctified ungoverned Fancy. 'Tis certain, The Thought of Foolishness is Sin, Prov. 24. 9. Foolish Thoughts are sinful Thoughts; the first-born of the Old Man, the first beginnings of all Sin; and how many of these vain Thoughts lodge within us where ever we lodge; their Name is Legion, for they are many: Who can understand these Errors! They are more than the Hairs of our Head. We read of those that work Evil upon their Beds, because there they devise it; and when the Morning is light they practise it, Mic. 2. 1. How often in the Night-season is the Mind disquieted and distracted with distrustful careful Thoughts; polluted with unchast and wanton Thoughts; intoxicated with proud aspiring Thoughts;

36 *How to begin every Day with God.*

Thoughts ; *sower'd* and *leaven'd* with *malissious revengeful* Thoughts ; or at the best *diverted* from devout and pious *Thoughts* by a thousand Impertinences : *Out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts* which lie down with us, and rise up with us, for out of that corrupt Fountain, which where-ever we go we carry about with us, these Streams naturally flow. Yea, and in the *Multitude of Dreams*, as well as in many *Words* there are also *divers Vanities*, Ecc. 5. 2.

And dare we go abroad till we have renew'd our Repentance, which we are every Night as well as every Day thus *making work* for ? Are we not concern'd to *confess* to him that knows our Hearts, their wandrings from him, to *complain* of them to him as *revolting and rebellious Hearts*, and bent to backslide ; to make our Peace in the Blood of Christ, and to pray, that the *Thought of our Heart may be forgiven us* ! We cannot with safety go into the Business of the Day under the Guilt of any Sin *unrepented of*, 'or unpardon'd.

8. In the Morning we are *addressing our selves to the Work of the Day*, and therefore are concern'd by Prayer to seek unto God for his Presence and Blessing. We come, and are encouraged to come boldly to the *Throne of Grace*, not only for *Mercy to pardon* what has been amiss, but for *Grace to help in every time of need* : And what time is it that is not a time of need with us ? And therefore what Morning should pass without Morning-Prayer ? We read of that which *the Duty of every Day requires*, Ezr. 3. 4. and in reference to that we must go to God every Morning to pray for the gracious Disposals of his Providence concerning us, and the gracious Operations of his Spirit upon us.

We have Families to *look after* it may be, and to *provide for*, and are in care to *do well* for them ;

How to Begin every Day with God. 37

them ; let us then every Morning by Prayer commit them to God, put them under the Conduct and Government of his *Grace*, and then we effectually put them under the Care and Protection of his *Providence*. Holy *Job* rose up early in the Morning to offer burnt-offerings for his Children, and we should do so to offer up Prayers and Supplications for them, according to the number of them all, *Job* 1. 5. Thus we cause the Blessing to rest on our Houses.

We are going about the *Business* of our Callings, perhaps, let us look up to God in the first Place for *Wisdom* and *Grace* to manage them well, in the Fear of God, and to abide with him in them ; and then we may in Faith beg of him to prosper and succeed us in them, to strengthen us for the Services of them, to support us under the *Fatigues* of them, to direct the *Designs* of them, and to give us Comfort in the *Gains* of them. We have Journeys to go, it may be, let us look up to God for his Presence with us, and go no whither, where we cannot in Faith beg of God to go with us.

We have a Prospect perhaps of Opportunities of doing or getting Good, let us look up to God for a *Heart* to every *Price* in our Hands, for Skill, and Will, and Courage to improve it, that it may not be as a *Price* in the Hand of a Fool. Every Day has its Temptations too, some perhaps we foresee, but there may be many more that we think not of, and are therefore concern'd to be earneſt with God, that we may not be led into any Temptation, but guarded against every one ; that whatever Company we come into, we may have Wisdom to do good, and no hurt to them ; and to get good, and no hurt by them.

We know not what a Day may bring forth ; little think in the Morning what Tidings we may hear,

38 *How to Begin every Day with God.*

hear, and what Events may befall us before Night, and should therefore beg of God, Grace to carry us through the Duties and Difficulties which we do not *foresee*, as well as those which we do; that in order to our standing compleat in all the *Will of God*, as the Day is, so the Strength may be. We shall find that *sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof*, and that therefore as it is Folly to take Thought for to Morrows Event, so it is Wisdom to take Thought for to Days Duty, that *sufficient unto this Day*, and the Duty of it, may be the Supplies of the Divine Grace, throughly to furnish us for every good Word and Work, and throughly to fortify us against every evil Word and Work; that we may not think of, or speak, or do any thing all Day, which we may have Cause upon any Account to wish unthought, unspoke, and undone again at Night.

For Application.

First, Let this Word put us in mind of our *Omissions*; for Omissions are Sins, and must come in to Judgment; how often has our Morning-Worship been either neglected or negligently perform'd. The Work has been either not done at all, or done *deceitfully*; either no Sacrifice at all brought, or it has been the *Torn*, and the *Lame*, and the *Sick*; either no Prayer, or the Prayer not directed aright, nor lifted up. We have had the Mornings Mercies, God has not been wanting in the Compassion and Care of a Father for us, yet we have not done the Morning's Service, but have been shamefully wanting in the Duty of Children to him.

Let us be truly humbled before God this Morning for our Sin and Folly herein, that we have

How to Begin every Day with God, 39

so often rob'd God of the Honour, and our selves of the Benefit of our Morning-Worship. God hath come into our Closets, seeking this Fruit, but has found none, or next to none, hath bearken'd and heard, but either we spake not to him at all, or spake not aright. Some trifling thing or other has serv'd for an Excuse to put it by once, and when once the good Usage has been broken in upon, Conscience has been wounded, and its Bonds weaken'd, and we have grown more and more cool to it, and perhaps by Degrees it has been quite left off.

Secondly, I beseech you, suffer a Word of Exhortation concerning this. I know what an Influence it would have upon the Prosperity of your Souls to be constant and sincere in your Secret Worship, and therefore give me leave to press it upon you with all Earnestness; let God hear from you every Morning, every Morning, let your Prayer be directed to him, and look up.

1. Make Conscience of your secret Worship; keep it up, not only because it has been a Custom you have received by Tradition from your Fathers, but because it is a Duty, concerning which you have received Commandments from the Lord. Keep up stated Times for it, and be true to them. Let those that have hitherto liv'd in the total Neglect, or in the frequent Omission of Secret Prayer, be perswaded from henceforward to look upon it, as the most needful part of their daily Business, and the most delightful part of their daily Comfort, and do it accordingly with a constant Care, and yet with a constant Pleasure.

No Persons that have the use of their Reason, can pretend an Exemption from this Duty; what is said to some is said to all, *Pray, pray, continue in Prayer,*

40 *How to Begin every Day with God.*

Prayer, and watch in the same. Rich People are not so much bound to *labour with their Hands* as the Poor, poor People are not so much bound to *give Alms* as the Rich, but both are *equally bound to pray*. The Rich are not *above* the Necessity of the Duty, nor the Poor *below* Acceptance with God in it. 'Tis not too soon for the youngest to begin to pray; and those whom the *Multitude of Years has taught Wisdom*, yet at their *End will be Fools*, if they think they have now no further occasion for Prayer.

Let none plead they *cannot pray*; if you were ready to perish with Hunger, you could *beg and pray* for Food; and if you see your selves undone by reason of Sin, can you not *beg and pray* for Mercy and Grace? Art thou a Christian? Never for shame say, *Thou canst not pray*, for that's as absurd as for a Soldier to say, he knows not how to handle a Sword, or a Carpenter an Ax. What are you call'd for *into the Fellowship of Christ*, but that by him you may have Fellowship with God. You cannot pray so well as others, pray as well as you can, and God will accept of you.

Let none plead they have not time in a Morning for Prayer; I dare say, you can find time for other things that are *less needful*; you had better take Time from Sleep, than want Time for Prayer; and how can you spend Time better, and more to your Satisfaction and Advantage? All the Business of the Day will prosper the better, for your *beginning* it thus *with God*.

Let none plead, that they have not a convenient Place to be *private in* for this Work; *Isaac* retir'd into the Field to pray; and the Psalmist could be alone with God in a *corner of the House-top*. If you cannot perform it with so much Secrecy as you would, yet perform it; 'tis doing

How to Begin every Day with God. 41

it with Ostentation, that is the Fault: not doing it under Observation, when it cannot be avoided. I remember, when I was a young Man, coming up hither to London in the Stage Coach, in King James's Time; there happen'd to be a Gentleman in the Company, that then was not afraid to own himself a *Jesuit*; many rencounters he and I had upon the Road, and this was one; he was praising the Custom in *Popish* Countries of keeping the Church Doors always open, for People to go into at any time to say their Prayers; I told him it look'd too like the Practice of the *Pharisees*, that pray'd in the *Synagogues*; and did not agree with Christ's Command, *Thou when thou prayest thy self, enter not into the Church with the Doors open, but into thy Closet and shut thy Doors*; when he was press'd with that Argument, he replied with some vehemence, I believe, you *Protestants* say your Prayers no where; for (said he) I have travell'd a great deal in the Coach in Company with *Protestants*, have often lain in Inns in the same Room with them, and have carefully watch'd them, and could never perceive that any of them said his Prayers Night or Morning but one, and he was a *Presbyterian*. I hope there was more Malice than Truth in what he said: But I mention it as an Intimation, that tho' we cannot be so private as we would be in our Devotions, yet we must not omit them, lest the Omission should prove not a Sin only, but a Scandal.

2. Make a Business of your Secret Worship, and be not slothful in this Business, but fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord. Take heed lest it degenerate into a Formality, and you grow customary in your accustomed Services. Go about the Duty solemnly. Be inward with God in it; 'tis
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42. *How to Begin every Day with God.*

not enough to *say your Prayers*, but you must *pray your Prayers*, must *pray in praying*, as *Elijah* did, *James* 5. 17. Let us learn to *labour fervently in Prayer*, as *Epaphras* did, *Col.* 4. 12. and we shall find, 'tis the *Hand of the Diligent* in this Duty that *maketh rich*. God looks not at the length of your Prayers, nor shall you be heard for your much speaking, or fine speaking; but God *requires Truth in the inward Part*, and it is the *Prayer of the Upright* that is *his Delight*. When you have pray'd, look upon your selves as thereby engag'd and encourag'd, both to serve God and to trust in him; that the *Comfort and Benefit* of your *Morning Devotions* may not be as the *Morning Cloud* which *passeth away*, but as the *Morning Light* which *shines more and more*.

T H E

THE
Second Discourse.

S H E W I N G
How. to Spend the Day with
G O D.

PSALM XXV. v.

—On thee do I wait all the Day.

WHich of us is there that can truly say thus? That lives this *Life of Communion with God*, which is so much our *Business*, and so much our *Blessedness*? How far short do we come of the Spirit of Holy *David*, tho' we have much better Assistances for our Acquaintance with God, than the Saints then had, by the clearer Discoveries of the Mediation of Christ. Yet that *weak* Christians who are sincere may not therefore *despair*, be it remember'd, that *David* himself was not *always* in such a Frame as that he could say so; he had his Infirmities, and

44 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

and yet was a *Man after God's own Heart* : We have ours, which if they be sincerely lamented and striven against, and the *habitual* Bent of our Souls be towards God and Heaven, we shall be accepted through Christ, for we are *not under the Law, but under Grace.*

However *David's* Profession in the Text, shews us what *should be* our Practise, *on God we must wait all the Day.* That notes two Things, a *patient Expectation*, and a *constant Attendance.*

1. It speaks a *Patient Expectation* of his coming to us in a way of Mercy ; and then, *all the Day* must be taken *figuratively*, for *all the Time* that the wanted and desired Mercy is delay'd. *David* in the former part of the Verse, pray'd for Divine Conduct and Instruction, *Lead me in thy Truth and teach me* ; he was at a Loss, and very desirous to *know* what God would have him to do, and was ready to do it ; but God kept him in *suspence*, he was not yet clear what was the Mind and Will of God, what Course he should steer, and how he should dispose of himself ; will he therefore proceed without Divine Direction ? No, *On thee will I wait all the Day*, as *Abraham* attended on his Sacrifice from Morning till the Sun went down, before God gave him an Answer to his Enquiries concerning his Seed, *Gen. 15. 5, 12* and as *Habakkuk* stood upon his Watch-tower to see what Answer God would give him, when he consulted his Oracle ; and tho' it do not come presently, yet *at the End it shall Speak and not Lie.*

David in the Words next before the Text, had call'd God *the God of his Salvation*, the God on whom he depended for Salvation, temporal and eternal Salvation, from whom he expected Deliverance out of his present *Distresses*, those

Trou-

How to Spend the Day with God. 45

Troubles of his Heart that were enlarged, v. 17. and out of the Hands of those Enemies that were ready to Triumph over him, v. 2. and that hated him with cruel hatred, v. 19. Hoping that God will be his Saviour. he resolves to wait on him all the Day, like a genuine Son of Jacob, whose dying Profession it was, Gen. 49. 18. *I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord.* Sometimes God prevents his People with the Blessings of his Goodness, before they call he answers them, is in the midst of his Church, to help her, and that right early, Psalm 46. 5. But at other times he seems to stand afar off, he delays the Deliverance, and keeps them long in Expectation of it, nay, and in suspense about it; the *Light is neither clear nor dark*, 'tis Day, and that's all, 'tis a cloudy and dark Day, and it is not till Evening Time, that it is Light, that the Comfort comes which they have been kept all the Day waiting for; nay, perhaps it comes not till far in the Night, 'tis at Midnight that the Cry is made, *Behold the Bridegroom comes.* The Deliverance of the Church out of her Troubles, the Success of her struggles and rest from them, a rescue from under the Rod of the Wicked, and the Accomplishment of all that which God hath promis'd concerning it, is what we must continue humbly waiting upon God for without Distrust or Impatience; we must wait all the Day.

1. Though it be a long Day; tho' we be kept waiting a great while, quite beyond our own reckoning. Tho' when we have waited long, we are still put to wait longer, and are bid with the Prophet's Servant to go yet seven times (1 Kings 18. 43.) before we perceive the least sign of Mercy coming. *We looked that this* and the other had been he that should have deliver'd Israel, but are
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46 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

disappointed ; *The Harvest is past, the Summer is ended, and we are not saved ;* Jer. 8. 20. The Time is prolong'd, nay, the Opportunities are let slip, the Summer-time and Harvest time, when we thought to have reaped the Fruit of all our Prayers and Pains, and Patience, is *past and ended*, and we are as far as ever from *Salvation ; the Time that the Ark abode in Kirjath-jearim*, was long, much longer than it was thought it would have been, when it was first lodg'd there ; 'twas *Twenty Years* ; so that *the whole House of Israel lamented after the Lord*, and began to fear it would abide for ever in that Obscurity, 1 Sam. 7. 2.

But tho' it be a *long Day*, it is but a *Day*, but *one Day*, and it is *known to the Lord*, Zech. 14. 7. It seems *long* while we are *kept waiting*, but the Happy Issue will enable us to reflect upon it as *short*, and but for a Moment. It is no longer than God hath *appointed*, and we are sure his Time is the best Time ; and his Favours are worth waiting for. The Time is long, but it is nothing to the Days of Eternity, when those that had *long Patience* shall be recompens'd for it with an everlasting Salvation.

2. Though it be a *dark Day*, yet let us wait upon God *all the Day*. Tho' while we are *kept waiting* for what God *will do*, we are *kept in the dark* concerning what he *is doing*, and what is best for us *to do*, yet let us be content to *wait in the dark*. Tho' we *see not our Signs*, tho' there is none to tell us *how long*, yet let us resolve to wait, *how long soever it be* ; for tho' *what God doth*, we *know not now*, yet we *shall know hereafter*, when the *Mystery of God* shall be *finish'd*.

Never was Man more at a plunge concerning God's Dealings with him than poor Job was ; I

How to Spend the Day with God. 47

go forward, but he is not there ; backward, but I cannot perceive him ; on the left Hand, on the right Hand, but I cannot see him, Job 23. 8, 9. yet he sits down, v. 10. resolving to wait on God all the Day with a Satisfaction in this, that tho' he know not the Way that he takes, he knows the way that I take, and when he has tried me, I shall come forth as Gold, approv'd, and improv'd. He sits by as a Refiner, and will take Care that the Gold be in the Furnace, no longer than is needful for the refining of it. When God's Way is in the Sea, so that he cannot be traced, yet we are sure his Way is in the Sanctuary, so that he may be trusted, see Psalm 77. 13, 19. And when Clouds and Darknes are round about him, yet even then Justice and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne.

3. Tho' it be a stormy Day, yet we must wait upon God all the Day. Tho' we are not only becalm'd, and do not get forward, but tho' the Wind be contrary, and drive us back, nay, tho' it be boisterous, and the Church be tossed with Tempests, and ready to sink, yet we must hope the best ; yet we must wait, and weather the Storm by Patience. It is some Comfort, that Christ is in the Ship, the Churches Cause is Christ's own Cause, he has espous'd it, and he will own it ; he is embark'd in the same Bottom with his People, and therefore, *Why are ye fearful ?* Doubt not but the Ship will come safe to Land ; tho' Christ seem for the present to be asleep, the Prayers of his Disciples will awake him, and he will rebuke the Winds and the Waves ; tho' the Bush burn, if God be in it, it shall not be consum'd. Yet this is not all, Christ is not only in the Ship, but at the Helm ; whatever threatens the Church is order'd by the Lord Jesus, and shall be made to work

48 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

work for its Good. 'Tis excellently express'd by Mr. George Herbert.

*Away Despair, my Gracious God doth bear,
When Winds and Waves assault my Keel,
He doth preserve it, he doth steer,
Even when the Boat seems most to reel.
Storms are the Triumph of his Art,
Well may he close his Eyes, but not his Heart.*

'Tis a seasonable Word at this Day ; what God will do with us we cannot tell ; but this we are sure, He is a God of Judgment, infinitely wise and just, and therefore, *Blessed are all they that wait for him, Isa. 30. 18.* He will do his own Work in his own Way and Time ; and tho' we be hurry'd back into the Wilderness, when we thought we had been upon the Borders of Canaan, we suffer justly for our Unbelief and Murmurings, but God *acts wisely*, and will be found faithful to his Promise ; his Time to judge for his People, and to repent himself concerning his Servants, is when he sees that their Strength is gone. This was seen of old in the Mount of the Lord, and shall be again. And therefore let us continue in a waiting Frame. Hold out Faith and Patience, for *it is good that a Man should both hope and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord.*

2. It speaks a constant Attendance upon him in a way of Duty. And so we understand the Day literally ; it was David's Practice to wait upon God all the Day, *דיון כל היום*. It signifies both every Day, and all the Day long ; 'tis the same with that Command, *Prov. 23. 17. Be thou in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long.*

Doff. It is not enough for us to begin every Day with God, but *on him we must wait every Day, and all the Day long.*

For the opening of this I must shew, (1.) What it is to *wait upon God*: And, (2.) That we must do this *every Day, and all the Day long.*

For the First, Let us enquire, what it is to *wait on God*. You have heard how much it is our Duty in the Morning to *speak to him*, in solemn Prayer. But have we then done with him for all Day? No, we must still be *waiting on him*; as one to whom we stand very *nearly related*, and very *strongly obliged*. To *wait on God* is to live a Life of *Desire* towards him, *Delight* in him, *Dependence* on him, and *Devotedness* to him.

1. It is to live a *Life of Desire towards God*; to *wait on him*, as the Beggar waits on his Benefactor, with earnest Desire to receive Supplies from him; as the Sick and Sore in *Bethesda's Pool*, waited for the stirring of the Water, and attended in the Porches with desire to be helped in and heal'd. When the Prophet had said, *Lord, in the way of thy Judgments we have waited for thee*, he explain'd himself thus in the next Words, the *Desire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the remembrance of thee*; and with my Soul have I *desired thee*, Isa. 26. 8, 9. Our Desire must be not only towards the *good Things* that God gives, but towards *God himself*, his Favour and Love, the Manifestation of his Name *to us*, and the Influences of his Grace *upon us*. Then we *wait on God*, when our Souls pant after him, and his Favour, when we *thirst for God, for the living God*; O that I may behold the Beauty of the Lord! O that I may taste his Goodness! O that I may bear

50 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

his Image, and be entirely conform'd to his Will! For there is *none in Heaven or Earth*, that I can desire in Comparison of him. O that I may know him more, and love him better, and be brought nearer to him, and made fitter for him. Thus upon the Wings of Holy Desire should our Souls be still *soaring upwards* towards God, still pressing forwards, forwards towards Heaven.

We must not only pray solemnly in the Morning, but that *D fire* which is the Life and Soul of Prayer, like the *Fire upon the Altar*, must be kept continually burning, ready for the Sacrifices that are to be offer'd upon it. The Bent and Bias of the Soul in all its Motions must be towards God, the *serv'ing* of him in all we do, and the *enjoying* of him in all we have. And this is principally intended in the Commands given us to *pray always*, to *pray without ceasing*, to *continue in Prayer*. Even when we are not making actual Addresses to God, yet we must have *habitual Inclinations* towards him; as a Man in Health, tho' he is not always eating, yet has always a Disposition in him towards the Nourishments and Delights of the Body. Thus must we be always *waiting on God*, as our chief Good, and *moving towards him*.

2. It is to live a *Life of Delight in God*, as the Lover waits on his Beloved. Desire is Love in Motion, as a Bird upon the Wing; Delight is Love at rest, as a Bird upon the Nest; now tho' our Desire must still be so towards God, as that we must be wishing for more of God, yet our Delight must be so in God, as that we must never wish for more than God. Believing him to be a God *All sufficient*, in him we must be entirely *satisfied*; let him be mine, and I have enough. Do we love to love God? Is it a pleasure to us to

think

How to Spend the Day with God. 51

think that there is a God, that he is such a one as he has reveal'd himself to be, that he is our God by Creation to dispose of us as he pleaseth, our God in Covenant to dispose of all for the best to us; this is *waiting on our God*, always looking up to him with Pleasure.

Something or other the Soul has that it *values it self by*, something or other that it *reposes it self in*; and what is it? God or the World? What is it that we *pride our selves in*? Which we make the Matter of our Boasting; it is the Character of worldly People, that they *boast themselves in the Multitude of their Riches*, Psalm 49. 6. and of their own *Might*, and the *Power of their own Hands*, which they think has *gotten them this Wealth*; it is the Character of Godly People, that *in God they boast all the Day long*, Psalm 44. 8. That's *waiting on God*; having our Eye always upon him with a *Secret Complacency*, as Men have upon that which is their Glory, and which they *glory in*.

What is it that we *please our selves with*, which we embrace with the greatest Satisfaction, in the Bosom of which we *lay our Heads*, and in having which we *bug our selves*, as having all we would have; the worldly Man when his Barns are full of Corn, saith, *Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry*; the godly Man can never say so till he finds his Heart full of God, and Christ, and Grace; and then, *return unto thy rest, O my Soul*, here repose thy self; the gracious Soul *dwells in God*, is *at home* in him, and there *dwells at ease*, is in him *perpetually pleas'd*; and whatever he meets with in the World to make him *uneasie*, he finds enough in God to *balance* it.

52 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

3. It is to live a *Life of Dependance on God*, as the Child waits on his Father, whom he has a *Confidence in*, and on whom he casts all his *Care*. To wait on God is to expect all Good to come to us from him, as the worker of all Good for us, and in us, the Giver of all Good to us, and the Protector of us from all Evil. Thus David explains himself, *Psalms 62. 5. My Soul, wait thou only upon God*, and continue still to do so, for my *Expectation is from him*, I look not to any other for the Good I need; for I know that every Creature is that to me, and no more than he makes it to be, and from him every Man's *Judgment proceeds*. Shall we lift up our Eyes to the Hills? Doth our Help come from thence? Doth the Dew that waters the Vallies come no further, than from the Tops of the Hills? Shall we go higher, and lift up our Eyes to the Heavens, to the Clouds? Can they of themselves give Rain! No, If God hear not the Heavens, they hear not the Earth; we must therefore look above the Hills, above the Heavens, for all our Help cometh from the Lord; it was the Acknowledgment of a King, and no good one neither, *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee, out of the Barn-floor, or out of the Wine-press?*

And our Expectations from God as far as they are guided by, and grounded upon the Word which he hath spoken, ought to be humbly confident, and with a full Assurance of Faith. We must know and be sure, that no Word of God shall fall to the Ground, that the Expectation of the Poor shall not perish. Worldly People say to their Gold, *Thou art my Hope*; and to the fine Gold, *Thou art my Confidence*, and the Rich Man's Wealth is his strong City: But God is the only Refuge and Portion of the Godly Man here in the

the *Land of the Living*; 'tis to him only that he saith, and he saith it with a Holy Boldness, *Thou art my Hope and my Confidence*. The *Eyes of all Things wait on him*, for he is good to all; but the Eyes of his Saints especially, for he is in a peculiar Manner good to *Israel*, good to them. They *know his Name*, and therefore will *trust and triumph in him*, as those that know they shall not be made *ashamed of their Hope*.

4. It is to live a *Life of Devotedness to God*, as the *Servant waits on his Master*, ready to observe his Will, and to do his Work, and in every Thing to consult his Honour and Interest. To *wait on God* is entirely and unreservedly to *refer our selves* to his wise and holy Directions, and Disposals, and *cheerfully to acquiesce* in them, and comply with them. The *Servant that waits on his Master* chuseth not his own Way, but *follows his Master* step by step; thus must we *wait on God*, as those that have no Will of our own, but what is wholly resolv'd into his; and must therefore study to accommodate our selves to his. 'Tis the Character of the *Redeemed of the Lord*, that they *follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes*, with an implicit Faith and Obedience. *As the Eyes of a Servant are to the Hand of his Master, and the Eyes of a Maiden to the Hand of her Mistress, so must our Eyes wait on the Lord*, to do what he appoints us, to take what he allots us; *Father thy Will be done; Master, thy Will be done*.

The *Servant waits on his Master*, not only to do him Service, but to do *him Honour*; and thus must we wait on God, that we may be to him *for a Name, and for a Praise*. His Glory must be our ultimate End, to which we, and all we are, have, and can do, must be dedicated;

54 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

we must wear his Livery, attend in his Courts, and follow his Motions as his Servants, for this End, that *He may in all things be glorified.*

To wait on God, is to make his Will our Rule.

1. To make the *Will of his Precept, the Rule of our Practise*, and to do every Duty with an Eye to that. We must *wait on him* to receive his Commands, with a Resolution to comply with them, how much soever they may contradict our corrupt Inclinations, or secular Interests. We must *wait on him*, as the Holy Angels do that *always behold the Face of their Father*, as those that are at his beck, and are ready to go upon the least Intimation of his Will, tho' but by a wink of his Eye, wherever he sends them. Thus must we *do the Will of God*, as the *Angels* do it that are in Heaven, those *Ministers of his* that do his Pleasure, and are always about his Throne in order to it; never out of the way.

David here prays, that God would *shew him his way*, and *lead him*, and *teach him*, and keep him, and forward him in the Way of his Duty; and so the Text comes in as a Plea to enforce that Petition, for *on thee do I wait all the Day*; ready to receive the Law from thy Mouth, and in every thing to observe thine Orders. And then it intimates this, that those and those only can expect to be *taught of God*, who are ready and willing to *do as they are taught*. If any Man will *do his Will*, be stedfastly resolv'd in the Strength of his Grace to comply with it, he shall know what his Will is. David prays, Lord, Give me Understanding, and then promiseth himself, I shall keep thy Law, yea, I shall observe it; as the Servant that waits on his Master. They that go up to the House of the Lord, with an Expectation that he will teach them his Ways, it must be with

How to Spend the Day with God. 55

a humble Resolution, that they will *walk in his Paths*, Isa. 2. 3. Lord, let the Pillar of Cloud and Fire go before me, for I am determin'd with full Purpose of Heart to *follow it*, and thus to *wait on my God all the Day*.

2. To make the *Will of his Providence*, the Rule of our Patience, and to bear every Affliction with an Eye to that. We are sure, it is God that *performeth all Things for us*, and he *performeth the Thing that is appointed for us*; we are as sure that All is well that God doth, and shall be made to *work for Good* to all that love him; and in order to that we ought to *acquiesce in*, and *accommodate our selves* to the whole Will of God. To *wait on the Lord*, is to say, It is the Lord, let him do with me as *seemeth good* to him, because nothing *seemeth good* to him, but what is really good; and so we shall see, when God's Work appears in a full Light; 'tis to say, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*, for *should it be according to my Mind?* It is to bring our Mind to our Condition in every Thing, so as to keep that calm and easie, whatever happens to make us uneasie.

And we must therefore *bear the Affliction*, whatever it is, because it is the Will of God; 'tis what he has allotted us, who *doth all according to the Counsel of his own Will*. This is Christian Patience; I was dumb, I open'd not my Mouth, not because it was *to no Purpose* to complain, but *because thou didst it*, and therefore I had *no Reason* to complain. And this will reconcile us to every Affliction, one as well as another, because whatever it is, it is the *Will of God*; and in Compliance with that we must not only be *Silent*, because of the Sovereignty of his Will, *Wou to him that strives with his Maker*; but we must be *satisfied*, because of the Wisdom and Goodness of it.

56 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

it. Whatever the Disposals of God's Providence may be concerning those that wait on him, we may be sure that as he *doth them no wrong*, so he *means them no hurt* : Nay, they may say as the *Psalmist* did, even then when he was *plagued all the Day long*, and *chastned every Morning*, however it be, yet *God is good* ; and therefore, *Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him, yet will I wait on him.*

I might open this Duty of *waiting on God*, by other Scripture Expressions which *speak the same thing*, and are, as this, *Comprehensive* of a great part of that Homage, which we are bound to pay to him, and that Communion which 'tis our Interest to keep up with him. Truly thus *our Fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son Jesus Christ.*

It is to *set God always before us*, Psalm 16. 8. To look upon him as one always *near us*, always at our *right Hand*, and that has *his Eye upon us*, where ever we are, and whatever we are doing ; nay, as one *in whom we live, and move, and have our being*, with whom we have to do, and to whom we are accountable. This is press'd upon us, as the great Principle of Gospel Obedience ; *walk before me, and be thou upright* ; herein consists that Uprightness which is our Evangelical Perfection, in walking at all Times as *before God*, and studying to approve our selves to him.

It is to have our *Eyes ever towards the Lord*, as it follows here, *Psa'm 25. 15.* Tho' we cannot see him by reason of our present Distance and Darkness, yet we must *look towards him*, towards the Place where his Honour dwells ; as those that desire the Knowledge of him and his Will, and direct all to his Honour as the Mark we aim at, labouring in this, that *whether present or absent we*
may

How to Spend the Day with God. 57

may be accepted of him. To wait on him, is to follow him *with our Eye* in all those Things wherein he is pleas'd to manifest himself, and to admit the Discoveries of his Being and Perfections.

It is to *acknowledge God in all our Ways*, Prov. 3. 6. in all the Actions of Life, and in all the Affairs of Life, we must walk in his Hand, and set our selves in the way of his Steps. In all our Undertakings, we must *wait upon him* for Direction and Success, and by Faith and Prayer *commit our way* to him to *undertake for us*; and him we must take with us where ever we go; *If thy Presence go not up with us, carry us not up hence*. In all our Comforts we must see his Hand giving them out to us, and in all our Crosses we must see the same Hand laying them upon us, that we may learn to receive both *Good and Evil*, and to bless the Name of the Lord both when he *gives*, and when he *takes*.

It is to *follow the Lord fully*, as Caleb did, Numb. 14. 24. 'Tis to *fulfil after the Lord*, so the Word is; to have respect to *all his Commandments*, and to study to *stand compleat in his whole Will*. Where ever God leads us, and goes before us, we must be *Followers of him as dear Children*, must *follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes*, and take him for our Guide whithersoever we go.

This is to *wait on God*, and those that do so may chearfully *wait for him*, for he will without fail appear in due Time to *their Joy*, and that Word of Solomon shall be made good to them; *He that waits on his Master shall be honour'd*, for Christ has said, *Where I am, there shall also my Servant be*, Prov. 27. 18.

For the Second Thing. Having shew'd you what it is to *wait on God*, I come next to shew, that
C 5 this

58 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

this we must do every Day, and all the Day long.

1. We must wait on our God every Day. *Omni die*, so some. This is the Work of every Day, which is to be done *in its Day*, for the *Duty of every Day requires it*. Servants in the Courts of Princes have their *Weeks*, or *Months* of waiting appointed them, and are ty'd to attend only at certain Times. But God's Servants must never be out of waiting; all the Days of our appointed Time, the Time of our Work and Warfare here on Earth we must be waiting, Job 14. 14. and not desire or expect to be discharg'd from this Attendance, till we come to Heaven, where we shall wait on God, as Angels do, more nearly and constantly.

We must wait on God every Day.

1. Both on *Sabbath days*, and on *Week-days*. The Lord's Day is instituted and appointed on purpose for our Attendance on God in the Courts of his House, there we must wait on him to give Glory to him, and to receive both Commands, and Favours from him. Ministers must then wait on their Ministry, Rom. 12. 7. and People must wait on it too, saying as *Cornelius* for himself and his Friends, *now we are all here ready before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of God*, Acts 10. 33. 'Tis for the Honour of God to help to fill up the Assemblies of those that attend at the Foot-stool of his Throne, and to add to their Number. The whole Sabbath-time, except what is taken up in Works of Necessity and Mercy, must be employ'd in waiting on our God. Christians are spiritual Priests, and as such 'tis their Business to wait in God's House, at the Time appointed.

But

But that is not enough ; we must wait upon our God on *Week days* too, for every Day of the Week we want Mercy *from him*, and have Work to do *for him*. Our waiting upon him in publick Ordinances on the *First Day of the Week*, is design'd to *fix us to*, and *fit us for* Communion with him all the Week after ; so that we answer not the Intentions of the Sabbath, unless the Impressions of it abide upon us, and go with us into the Business of the Week, and be *kept always in the Imagination of the Thought of our Heart*. Thus *from one Sabbath to another*, and *from one New Moon to another*, we must keep in a holy gracious Frame ; must be so *in the Spirit on the Lord's Day*, as to *walk in the Spirit* all the Week.

2. Both on *Idle Days* and *Busie Days*, we must be found *waiting on God*. Some Days of our Lives are Days of Labour and Hurry, when our particular Calling calls for our close and diligent Application ; but we must not think that will excuse us from our constant Attendance on God. Even then when our Hands are *working about the World*, our Hearts may be *waiting on our God*, by an habitual Regard to him, to his Providence as our Guide, and his Glory as our End in our worldly Business ; and thus we must *abide with him* in them. Those that *rise up early*, and *sit up late*, and *eat the Bread of Carefulness* in pursuit of the World, yet are concern'd to *wait on God*, because otherwise all their Care and Pains will signify nothing ; 'tis *Labour in vain*, Psalm 127. 1, 2. nay, 'tis *Labour in the Fire*.

Some Days of our Lives we relax from Business, and *take our ease*. Many of you have your Time for Diversion, but then when you lay aside other Business, this of *waiting upon God* must not be laid aside. When you prove your selves with
Mirth,

60 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

Mirth, as Solomon did, and say, you will enjoy *Pleasure* a little, yet let this *Wisdom* remain with you, (Eecl. 2. 1, 3.) let your Eye be then up to God, and take heed of dropping your Communion with him, in that which you call an agreeable Conversation with your Friends. Whether it be a Day of Work, or a Day of Rest, we shall find nothing like *waiting upon God*; both to *lighten* the Toil of our Work, and to *sweeten* the Comfort of our Repose. So that whether we have *much to do*, or *little to do* in the World, still we must *wait upon God*, that we may be kept from the Temptation that attends both the one and the other.

3. Both in *Days of Prosperity*, and in *Days of Adversity*, we must be found *waiting upon God*. Doth the World smile upon us, and court us? yet let us not turn from *attending* on God, to *make our Court* to it: If we have never so much of the *Wealth* of the World, yet we cannot say we have *no need of God*, no further occasion to make use of him, as David was ready to say, when in his *Prosperity* he said he should never be moved; but soon saw his Error, when God hid his Face, and he was troubled, Psal. 30. 6. When our Affairs prosper, and into our Hands God bringeth plentifully, we must wait upon God as our great Landlord, and own our Obligations to him; must beg his Blessing on what we have, and his Favour with it, and depend upon him both for the Continuance, and for the Comfort of it. We must wait upon God for Wisdom and Grace, to use what we have in the World for the Ends for which we are intrusted with it, as those that must give Account, and know not how soon. And how much soever we have of this World, and how richly soever it is given us to enjoy it, still we must wait upon God for better things, not only
than

How to Spend the Day with God. 61

than the World gives, but than he himself *gives in this World.* Lord put me not off with this for a Portion.

And when the World frowns upon us, and things go very cross, we must not so *fret ourselves* at its Frowns, or so *frighten our selves* with them, as thereby to be driven off from waiting on God, but rather let us thereby be driven to it. Afflictions are sent for this End, to bring us to the Throne of Grace, to teach us to pray, and to make the Word of God's Grace precious to us. In the Day of our Sorrow we must *wait upon* God for those Comforts which are sufficient to *ballance our Grievs*; *Job*, when in Tears, *fell down and worshipped God, taking away*, as well as *giving*. In the Day of our Fear we must *wait upon* God for those Encouragements that are sufficient to *silence our Fears*; *Jeiosaphat* in his Distress waited on God, and it was not in vain, his Heart was *established* by it; and so was *David's* often, which brought him to this Resolution, which was an Anchor to his Soul, *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*

4. Both in the *Days of Youth*, and in the *Days of Old Age*, we must be found *waiting on God*. Those that are Young cannot begin their Attendance on God *too soon*: The Child *Samuel* minister'd to the Lord, and the Scripture-Story puts a particular mark of Honour upon it; and Christ was wonderfully pleas'd with the *Hosannas* of the Children that *waited on him*, when he rode in Triumph into *Jerusalem*: When *Solomon* in his Youth, upon his Accession to the Throne, waited upon God for *Wisdom*, 'tis said *the saying pleased the Lord. I remember thee* (saith God to *Israel*) *even the Kindness of thy Youth, when thou wentest after me, and didst wait upon me in a Wilder-*

62 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

Wilderness, Jer. 2. 2. To *wait upon God*, is to be mindful of our Creator, and the proper time for that, is in *the Days of our Youth*, Eccl. 12. 1. Those that would *wait upon God* aright, must learn betimes to do it; the most *accomplish'd* Courtiers are those that are *reared at Court*.

And may the *Old Servants* of Jesus be dismiss'd from *waiting* on him! No, their Attendance is still requir'd, and shall be still accepted; they shall not be *cast off* by their Master in the time of old Age, and therefore let not them then desert his Service. When through the Infirmities of Age they can no longer be *working Servants* in God's Family, yet they may be *waiting Servants*. Those that like *Barzillai* are unfit for the Entertainments of the Courts of Earthly Princes, yet may relish the Pleasures of God's Courts as well as ever. The *Levites* when they were past the Age of fifty, and were discharg'd from the toilsom part of their Ministration, yet still must *wait on God*, must be quietly waiting, to give Honour to him, and to receive Comfort from him. Those that have *done the Will of God*, and their doing Work is at an End, have *need of Patience* to enable them to wait 'till they *inherit the Promise*: And the nearer the Happiness is which they are *waiting for*, the dearer should the God be they are *waiting on*, and hope shortly to be with, to be with eternally.

2. We must wait on our God *all the Day*, *toto die*, so we read it. *Every Day from Morning to Night* we must continue *waiting on God*; whatever change there may be of our Employment, this must be the constant Disposition of our Souls, we must *attend upon God*, and have our *Eyes ever towards him*; we must not at any time allow our selves to *wander from God*, or to *attend on* any

How to Spend the Day with God. 63

any thing *beside him*, but what we attend on *for him*; in Subordination to his Will, and in Subserviency to his Glory.

1. We must *cast our daily Cares upon him*. Every Day brings with it its fresh Cares, more or less, these wake with us every Morning, and we need not go so far forward as to *morrow* to fetch Care, *sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof*; you that are great Dealers in the World, have your Cares attending you *all the Day*; tho' you *keep them to your selves*, yet they sit down with you, and rise up with you; they go out and come in with you, and are more a load upon you than those you converse with are aware of. Some, through the weakness of their Spirits, can scarce determine any thing but with *fear and trembling*.

Let this Burthen be *cast upon the Lord*, believing that his Providence extends it self to all your Affairs, to all Events concerning you, and to all the Circumstances of them, even the most *minute* and seemingly *accidental*; that your *Times* are *in his Hand*, and all your ways at his Dispose; believe his Promise, that *all things shall be made to work for good to those that love him*, and then refer it to him in every thing, to do with you and yours *as seemeth good in his Eyes*, and rest satisfied in having done so, and resolve to be *easy*. Bring your Cares to God by Prayer *in the Morning*, spread them before him, and then make it to appear *all the Day*, by the Composednets and Cheerfulness of your Spirits, that you left them with him as *Hannah* did, who, *when she had pray'd*, went her way and did eat, and her Countenance was no more sad, 1 Sam. 1. 18. Commit your way to the Lord, and then submit to his Disposal of it, tho' it may cross your Expectations; and

64 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

and bear up your selves upon the Assurances God has given you, that he will *care for you* as the tender Father for the Child.

2. We must *manage our daily Business for him*, with an Eye to his *Providence*, putting us into the Calling and Employment wherein we are; and to his *Precept*, making Diligence in it our Duty; with an Eye to his *Blessing*, as that which is necessary to make it comfortable and successful; and to his *Glory*, as our highest End in all. This *sanctifies* our common Actions to God, and *sweetens* them, and makes them pleasant to our selves. If *Gaius* brings his Friends that he is parting with a little way *on their Journey*, it is but a piece of *common Civility*, but let him do it *after a godly sort*; let him in it pay respect to them, because they *belong to Christ*, and for his sake; let him do it that he may have an opportunity of so much more profitable Communication with them, and then it becomes an Act of *Christian Piety*, 3 John 6. 'Tis a general Rule by which we must govern our selves in the Business of every Day, *Whatever we do in Word or Deed, to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus*, Col. 3. 17. and thus in and by the Mediator we *wait on our God*.

This is particularly recommended to *Servants*, tho' their Employments are but mean, and they are under the Command of their *Masters according to the Flesh*, yet let them do their servile Works *as the Servants of Christ, as unto the Lord, and not unto Men*; let them do it *with singleness of Heart as unto Christ*, and they shall be accepted of him, and from him shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance, Eph. 6. 5, 6, 7, 8. Col. 3. 22, 24. Let them *wait on God all the Day*, when they are doing their Days Work, by doing it faith-

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How to Spend the Day with God. 65

faithfully and conscientiously, that they may *adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour*, by aiming at his Glory even in common Business : They work that they may get *Bread*, they would get Bread that they may *live*, they would live nor that they may *live to themselves*, and please themselves, but that they may *live to God*, and please him. They work that they may *fill up time*, and *fill up a place* in the World, and because that God who made and maintains us, has appointed us with *quietness to work and mind our own Business*.

3. We must *receive our daily Comforts from him* ; we must *wait on him* as our Benefactor, as the *Eyes of all things wait upon him, to give them their Food in due season, and what he giveth them, that they gather*. To him we must look as to our Father for our *daily Bread*, and from him we are appointed to *ask it*, yea, tho' we have it in the House, tho' we have it upon the Table. We must *wait upon him* for a Covenant Right to it, for leave to make Use of it, for a Blessing upon it, for Nourishment by it, and for Comfort in it. 'Tis in the Word and Prayer that we *wait on God*, and keep up Communion with him, and by these *every Creature of God is sanctified to us*, 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5. and the Property of it is alter'd ; *To the Pure all things are pure* ; they have them from the Covenant, and not from common Providence, which makes a little that the Righteous Man has, *better than the Riches of many wicked*, and much more valuable and comfortable.

No Inducement can be more powerful to make us see to it, that what we have we get it *honestly*, and use it *soberly*, and give God his due out of it, than this Consideration, that we have our All from the Hand of God, and are intrusted with

66 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

with it as *Stewards*, and consequently are *accountable*. If we have this Thought as a golden Thread running through all the Comforts of every Day, these are God's Gifts, every Bit we eat, and every Drop we drink is *his Mercy*, every Breath we draw, and every Step we take, *his Mercy*, this will keep us continually *waiting upon him*, as the *Affs* on his *Master's Crib*, and will put a double sweetness into all our Enjoyments. God will have his Mercies taken *fresh* from his *Compassions*, which for this Reason are said to be *new every Morning*: and therefore 'tis not once a Week that we are to *wait upon him*, as People go to Market to buy Provisions for the whole Week, but we must wait on him *every Day, and all the Day*, as those that live *from Hand to Mouth*, and yet live *very easie*.

4. We must *resist our daily Temptations*, and do our *daily Duties in the Strength of his Grace*. Every Day brings its Temptations with it; our Master knew that when he taught us, as duly as we pray for our daily Bread, to pray that we might not be *led into Temptation*. There's no Business we engage in, no Enjoyment we partake of, but it has its Snares attending it; *Satan* by it assaults us, and endeavours to *draw us into Sin*: Now Sin is the great Evil we should be continually upon our Guard against, as *Nehemiah* was, *Chap. 6. 13.* *That I should be afraid, and do so, and sin.* And we have no way to secure our selves but by *waiting on God all the Day*, we must not only in the *Morning* put our selves under the Protection of his Grace, but we must *all Day* keep our selves under the Shelter of it; must not only go forth, but go on in Dependance upon that Grace which he hath said shall be *sufficient for us*, that Care which will not suffer us to be tempted above what we

How to Spend the Day with God. 67

we are able. Our waiting upon God will furnish us with the best Arguments to make use of in resisting Temptations, and with *Strength according to the Day; Be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might,* and then we wait on the Lord all the Day.

We have Duty to do, many an opportunity of speaking good Words, and doing good Works, and we must see and own that we are *not sufficient of our selves* for any thing that is good, not so much as to *think a good Thought*: we must therefore *wait upon God*, must seek to him, and depend upon him, for that Light and Fire, that Wisdom and Zeal, which is necessary to the due discharge of our Duty; that by *this Grace* we may not only be fortified against every Evil Word and Work, but *furnished for every good Word and Work*. From the Fulness that is in Jesus Christ, we must by Faith be continually drawing *Grace for Grace*, Grace for all gracious Exercises; Grace to help in *every time of need*: We must *wait on this Grace*, must follow the Conduct of it, comply with the Operations of it, and must be *turn'd to it as Wax to the Seal*.

5. We must *bear our daily Afflictions with Submission to his Will*: We are bid to expect *Trouble in the Flesh*, something or other happens every Day that grieves us, something in our Relations, something in our Callings, Events concerning our selves, our Families, or Friends, that are matter of Sorrow; perhaps we have every Day some bodily Pain or Sickness; or, some Cross and Disappointment in our Affairs; now in these we must *wait upon God*. Christ requires it of all his Disciples, that they *take up their Cross daily*, Mat. 16. 24. we must not wilfully pluck the Cross down upon us, but *must take it up when God*

68. *How to Spend the Day with God.*

God lays it in our way, and not go a step out of the way of Duty, either to *meet* it, or to *miss* it. 'Tis not enough to *bear the Cross*, but we must *take it up*, we must accommodate our selves to it, and acquiesce in the Will of God in it. Not, *This is an Evil and I must bear it*, because I cannot help it, but *This is an Evil and I will bear it*, because it is the Will of God.

We must see every Affliction allotted us by our Heavenly Father, and in it must eye his *correcting Hand*, and therefore must *wait on him* to know the Cause *wherefore he contends with us*, what the Fault is for which we are in this Affliction *chasten'd*; what the Distemper is which is to be by this Affliction *cur'd*, that we may answer God's End in afflicting us, and so may be made *Partakers of his Holiness*. We must attend the Motions of Providence, keep our Eye upon our Father when he frowns, that we may discover what his Mind is, and what the *Obedience* is we are to learn, *by the things that we suffer*. We must *wait on God* for support under our Burthens; must put our selves into, and stay our selves upon the *everlasting Arms* which are laid under the Children of God to sustain them, when the Rod of God is upon them. And him we must attend for Deliverance; must not seek to extricate our selves by any sinful indirect Methods, nor look to Creatures for Relief, but still *wait on the Lord until that he have Mercy on us*; well content to bear the Burthen 'till God ease us of it, and ease us in *Mercy*, Psal. 123. 2. If the Affliction be lengthen'd out, yet we must *wait upon the Lord*, even when he *hides his Face*, Isa. 8. 17. hoping it is but in a little *Wrath*, and for a small Moment, Isa. 54. 7, 8.

6. We must expect the Tidings and Events of every Day, with a chearful and entire Resignation to the Divine Providence. While we are in this World we are still expecting, hoping well, fearing ill; we know not what a Day, or a Night, or an Hour will bring forth, Prov. 27. 1. but it is big with something, and we are too apt to spend our Thoughts in vain about things future, which happen quite differently from what we imagin'd. Now in all our Prospects we must wait upon God.

Are we in hopes of good Tidings, a good Issue? let us wait on God as the Giver of the good we hope for, and be ready to take it from his Hand; and to meet him with suitable Affections then when he is coming towards us in a way of Mercy. Whatever Good we hope for, 'tis God alone, and his Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, that we must hope in. And therefore our Hopes must be humble and modest, and regulated by his Will; what God has promis'd us, we may with assurance promise our selves, and no more. If thus we wait on God in our Hopes, should the Hope be deferr'd, it would not make the Heart sick? no nor if it should be disappointed, for the God we wait on, will over-rule all for the best? But when the Desire comes, in Prosecution of which we have thus waited on God, we may see it coming from his Love, and it will be a Tree of Life, Prov. 13. 12.

Are we in fear of evil Tidings, of melancholy Events, and a sad Issue of the depending Affair? Let us wait on God to be deliver'd from all our Fears, from the things themselves we are afraid of, and from the amazing tormenting Fears of them, Psalm 34. 4. When Jacob was with good reason afraid of his Brother Esau, he waited on God, brought his Fears to him, wrestled with him,

70 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

him, and prevailed for Deliverance! *What time I am afraid, saith David, I will trust in thee, and wait on thee; and that shall establish the Heart, shall fix it, so as to set it above the Fear of evil Tidings.*

Are we *in suspense* between Hope and Fear, sometimes one prevails, and sometimes the other, let us *wait on God*, as the God to whom belong *the Issues of Life and Death, Good and Evil*, from whom our Judgment, and every Man's, doth proceed, and *compose our selves* into a quiet Expectation of the Event, whatever it may be, with a Resolution to accommodate our selves to it: Hope the best, and get ready for the worst, and then take what God sends.

For Application:

First, Let me further urge upon you this Duty of *waiting upon God all the Day*, in some more particular Instances, according to what you have to do *all the Day*, in the ordinary Business of it. We are weak and forgetful, and need to be *put in mind* of our Duty in general, upon every occasion for the doing of it; and therefore I chuse to be thus *particular*, that I may be your Remembrancer.

1. When you *meet with your Families in the Morning*, wait upon God for a Blessing upon *them*, and attend him with your Thanksgivings for the Mercies you and yours have *jointly* received from God the Night past: *you and your Houses* must serve the Lord, must *wait on him*. See it owing to his Goodness, who is the Founder and Father of the Families of the Righteous, that you *are* together, that the *voice of Rejoicing and Salvation is in your Tabernacles*, and therefore *wait up-*

How to Spend the Day with God. 71

on him to continue you together, to make you Comforts to one another, to enable you to do the Duty of every Relation, and to lengthen out the Days of your Tranquillity. In all the Conversation we have with our Families, the Provision we make for them, and the Orders we give concerning them, we must *wait upon God*, as the *God of all the Families of Israel*, *Jer. 31. 1.* And have an Eye to Christ, as He *in whom all the Families of the Earth are blessed.*

Every Member of the Family sharing in Family Mercies, must *wait on God* for Grace to contribute to *Family Duties*. Whatever disagreeableness there may be in any Family Relation, instead of having the Spirit either *lurthen'd* with it, or *provoked* by it, let it be an Inducement to *wait on God*, who is able either to redress the Grievance, or to balance it, and give Grace to bear it.

2. When you are *pursuing the Education of your Children, or the young Ones under your Charge*, wait upon God for *his Grace* to make the Means of their Education successful. When you are your selves giving them Instruction in Things pertaining either to Life or Godliness, their General or Particular Calling, when you are *sending them to School* in a Morning, or ordering them the Business of the Day, wait upon God to *give them an Understanding*, and a good Capacity for their Business. Especially their main Business, *for it is God that giveth Wisdom*. If they are but *slow*, and do not come on as you could wish, yet *wait on God* to bring them forward, and to give them his Grace in his own Time; and while you are patiently waiting on him, that will encourage you to *take Pains* with them, and will likewise make you *patient and gentle* towards them.

And

72 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

And let Children and young People wait on God in all their daily Endeavours, to fit themselves for the Service of God and their Generation ; you desire to be Comforts to your Relations, to be good for something in this World, do you not ? Beg of God then a *wise* and an *understanding Heart*, as Solomon did, and *wait upon him all the Day* for it, that you may be *still increasing in Wisdom*, as you do in *Stature*, and *in Favour with God and Man*.

3. When you go to your Shops, or apply your selves to the Business of your particular Calling, wait upon God for his Presence with you. Your Business calls for your *constant Attendance*, every Day, and all the Day ; keep thy Shop, and thy Shop will keep thee ; but let your Attendance on God in your Callings, be as *constant* as your Attendance on your Callings. Eye God's Providence in all the Occurrences of them. Open Shop with this Thought, I am now in the way of my Duty, and I depend upon God to bless me in it. When you are waiting for Customers, wait on God to find you something to do in that Calling to which he hath called you ; those you call *Chance Customers*, you should rather call *Providence Customers*, and should say of the Advantage you make by them, *The Lord my God brought it to me*.

When you are *buying* and *selling*, see God's Eye upon you to observe, whether you are *honest* and *just* in your Dealings, and do no wrong to those you deal with : And let your Eye then be up to him, for that *Discretion* to which God doth instruct not only the *Husbandman*, but the *Tradesman*, *Isa. 28. 26.* that *Prudence* which directs the way, and with which it is promis'd the *Good Man* shall order his Affairs ; for that *Blessing* which

which *makes Rich*, and *adds no Sorrow with it*; for that *honest Profit* which may be expected in the way of *honest Diligence*.

Whatever your Employments be, in Country-Business, City-Business, or Sea-Business, or only in the Business of the House, go about them *in the Fear of God*, depending upon him to make them comfortable and successful, and to *prosper the Work of your Hands unto you*. And hereby you will arm your selves against the many Temptations you are compassed about with in your worldly Business; by *waiting on God*, you will be freed from that *Care and Cumber* which attends *much serving*, will have your Minds rais'd above the little things of Sense and Time, will be *serving God*, then when you are most busie about *the World*, and will have God in your Hearts, when your Hands are full of the World.

4. When you take a Book into your Hands, *God's Book*, or any other useful good Book, wait upon God for his Grace to enable you to *make a good use of it*. Some of you spend a deal of Time every Day in reading, and I hope none of you let a Day pass without reading some Portions of Scripture, either alone or with your Families; take heed that the Time you spend in Reading be not *lost Time*; it is so, if you read that which is idle and vain, and unprofitable; it is so, if you read that which is good, even the Word of God it self, and do not *mind* it, or *observe* it, or aim to make it of any Advantage to you; wait upon God, who gives you those Helps for your Souls, to make them helpful indeed to you. The *Eunuch* did so, when he was reading the Book of the Prophet *Isaiab* in his Chariot, and God presently sent him one, who made him *understand what he read*.

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74 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

You read perhaps now and then the Histories of former Times ; in acquainting your selves with them, you must have an *Eye to God*, and to that wise and gracious Providence which govern'd the World before we were born, and preserv'd the Church in it, and therefore may be still depended upon to do all for the best, for he is *Israel's King of Old*.

5. When you sit down to your Tables, wait on God, see his Hand spreading and preparing a Table before you in despite of your Enemies, and in the Society of your Friends ; often review the Grant which God made to our first Father *Adam*, and in him to us, of the Products of the Earth, *Gen. 1. 29. Behold I have given you every Herb bearing Seed, Bread Corn especially, to you it shall be for Meat.* And the Grant he afterwards made to *Noah* our second Father, and in him to us, *Gen. 9. 3. Every moving Thing that liveth shall be Meat for you, even as the green Herb ;* and see in those what a bountiful Benefactor he is to Mankind, and wait upon him accordingly.

We must eat and drink to the Glory of God, and then we wait on him in eating and drinking. We must receive Nourishment for our Bodies, that they may be fitted to serve our Souls in the Service of God, to his Honour in this World. We must taste Covenant Love in common Mercies, and enjoy the Creator while we are using the Creature ; we must depend upon the Word of Blessing from the Mouth of God, to make our Food nourishing to us ; and if our Provisions be mean and scanty, we must make up the want of them by Faith in the Promise of God, and rejoice in him, as the God of our Salvation, tho' the Fig-tree doth not blossom, and there is no Fruit in the Vine.

6. When

6. When you *visit your Friends*, or receive their *Visits*, wait upon God; let your Eye be to him with Thankfulness for your Friends and Acquaintance, that you have Comfort in; that the *Wilderness* is not made your *Habitation*, and the *solitary* and desert *Land* your *Dwelling*; that you have Comfort not only in your own Houses, but in those of your Neighbours, with whom you have Freedom of Converse; and that you are not *driven out from among Men*, and made a Burthen and Terror to all about you. That you have Clothing not only for Necessity but for Ornament, to go abroad in, is a Mercy which, that we may not pride our selves in, we must take notice of God in, *I decked thee with Ornaments*, saith God, and *put Ear-rings in thine Ears*, Ezek. 16. 11, 12. That you have Houses, Furniture, and Entertainment, not only for your selves but for your Friends, is a Mercy in which God must be acknowledg'd.

And when we are in Company, we must *look up to God* for Wisdom to carry our selves, so as that we may do much Good to, and get no Harm by those with whom we converse; *wait on God* for that Grace with which our Speech should be always *season'd*, by which all corrupt Communication may be prevented, and we may abound in that which is Good, and to the Use of edifying, and which may *minister Grace to the Hearers*, that our Lips may feed many.

7. When you give Alms, or do any Act of Charity, wait on God, do it as unto him, give to a Disciple in the Name of a Disciple, to the Poor because they belong to Christ; do it not for the Praise of Men, but for the Glory of God, with a single Eye, and an upright Heart, direct it to him, and then your Alms as well as your Prayers,

76 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

like those of *Cornelius*, come up for a Memorial before God, Acts 10. 4. Beg of God to accept what you do for the Good of others, that your *Alms* may indeed be *Offerings*, Acts 24. 17. May be an *Odor of a sweet Smell*, a *Sacrifice acceptable*, well pleasing to God, Phil. 4. 18.

Desire of God a Blessing upon what you give in Charity, that it may be comfortable to those to whom it is given, and that tho' what you are able to give is but a *little*, like the *Widow's two Mites*, yet that by God's Blessing it may be doubled, and made to go a great way, like the *Widow's Meal in the Barrel*, and *Oil in the Cruise*.

Depend upon God to make up to you what you lay out in good Works, and to recompense it abundantly in the *Resurrection of the Just*; nay, and you are encouraged to wait upon him, for a return of it even in this Life; 'tis *Bread cast upon the Waters*, which you shall find again after many Days; and you should carefully observe the Providence of God, whether it do not make you rich amends for your good Works, according to the Promise, that you may understand the *Loving-kindness of the Lord*, and his Faithfulness to the Word which he hath spoken.

8. When you enquire after publick News, in that wait upon God; do it with an Eye to him; for this reason, because you are truly concern'd for the Interests of his Kingdom in the World, and lay them near your Hearts; because you have a Compassion for Mankind, for the Lives and Souls of Men, and especially of God's People; ask, *what News?* Not as the *Athenians*, only to satisfy a vain Curiosity, and to pass away an idle Hour or two, but that you may know how to direct your Prayers and Praises, and how to

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balance your Hopes and Fears, and may gain such an Understanding of the Times, as to learn what you and others *ought to do*.

If the Face of Publick Affairs be bright and pleasing, *wait upon God* to carry on and perfect his own Work; and depend not upon the Wisdom or Strength of any Instruments; if it be dark and discouraging, *wait upon God* to prevent the Fears of his People, and to appear for them, *when he sees that their Strength is gone*. In the midst of the greatest Successes of the Church, and the Smiles of Second Causes, we must not think it *needless* to wait on God; and in the midst of its greatest Discouragements, when its Affairs are reduced to the last Extremity, we must not think it *fruitless* to wait upon God; for Creatures cannot help *without him*, but he can help *without them*.

9. When you are going *Journies*, wait on God; put your selves under his Protection, commit your selves to his Care, and depend upon him to give his Angels a Charge concerning you, to *bear you up in their Arms* when you move, and to *pitch their Tents about you* where you rest. See how much you are indebted to the Goodness of his Providence, for all the Comforts and Conveniences you are surrounded with in your Travels. 'Tis he that has cast our Lot in a Land where we *wander not in Wildernesses*, as in the Desarts of *Arabia*, but have safe and beaten Roads; and that through the Terrors of War, the *High Ways are not unoccupied*; to him we owe it, that the inferiour Creatures are serviceable to us, and that our *going out and coming in* are preserv'd; that when we are *abroad* we are not in *Banishment*, but have Liberty to *come home again*; and when we are *at home*, we are

78 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

not under *Confinement*, but have *Liberty* to go abroad

We must therefore have our Eyes up to God at our setting out, Lord, *go along with me* where I go; under his Shelter we must travel, confiding in his Care of us, and encouraging our selves with that in all the Dangers we meet with; and in our return must own his Goodness; all our Bones must say, *Lord, who is like unto thee*, for he *keepeth all our Bones, not one of them is broken*.

10. When we retire into Solitude, to be alone, walking in the Fields, or alone reposing our selves in our Closets, still we must be *waiting on God*; still we must keep up our Communion with him, when we are communing with our own Hearts. When we are alone, we must not be alone, but the Father must be with us, and we with him. We shall find Temptations even in Solitude, which we have need to guard against; Satan set upon our Saviour, when he was alone in a Wilderness; but there also we have opportunity, if we but know how to improve it, for that Devout, that Divine Contemplation, which is the best Conversation, so that we may never be less alone than when alone. If when we sit alone and keep Silence, withdrawn from Business and Conversation, we have but the Art, I should say the Heart to fill up those vacant Minutes with pious Meditations of God and Divine Things, we then gather up the Fragments of Time which remain, that nothing may be lost, and so are we found *waiting on God all the Day*.

Secondly, Let me use some *Motives* to perswade you, thus to live a Life of Communion with God, by *waiting on him all the Day*.

How to Spend the Day with God. 79

1. Consider, *The Eye of God is always upon you.* When we are with our Superiors, and observe them to *look upon us*, that engageth us to *look upon them*; and shall we not then look up to God, whose Eyes always *behold*, and whose *Eye-lids try the Children of Men*. He *sees* all the Motions of our Hearts, and *sees with Pleasure* the Motions of our Hearts *towards him*, which should engage us to set him always before us.

The Servant, tho' he be careless at other times, yet when he is under *his Master's Eye*, will wait in his Place, and keep close to his Business; we need no more to engage us to Diligence, than to do our Work with *Eye-service*, while our Master *looks on*, and because he doth so, for then we shall never look off.

2. *The God you are to wait on, is one with whom you have to do.* Heb. 4. 13. *All Things, even the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, are naked, and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do; περὶ ὧν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος* with whom *we* have Business, or Word; who hath something to say to us, and to whom we have something to say; or, as some read it, *To whom for us there is an Account*; there is a Reckoning, a running Account between us and him: And we must every one of us shortly give Account of our selves to him, and of every thing done in the Body, and therefore are concern'd to *wait on him*; that all may be *made even* daily between us and him in the Blood of Christ, which *ballanceth* the Account. Did we consider how much *we have to do* with God every Day, we would be more diligent and constant in our Attendance on him.

3. *The God we are to wait upon, continually waits to be gracious to us*; He is always doing us good, prevents us with the Blessings of his Good-

80 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

ness, daily loads us with his Benefits, and slips no Opportunity of shewing his Care of us when we are in danger; his Bounty to us when we are in want; and his Tenderneſs for us when we are in sorrow. His good *Providence waits on us all the Day*, to preserve our going out and our coming in, *Iſa. 30. 18.* to give us Relief and Succour in *due season*, to be seen in the Mount of the Lord. Nay, his good *Grace waits on us all the Day*, to help us in every time of need; to be Strength to us according as the Day is, and all the Occurrences of the Day. Is God thus forward to do us good, and shall we be backward and remiss in doing him Service.

4. If we attend upon God, his Holy Angels shall have a Charge to attend upon us. They are all appointed to be *ministring Spirits*, to minister for the good of them that shall be Heirs of Salvation, and more good Offices they do us every Day than we are aware of. What an Honour, what a Privilege is it to be waited on by Holy Angels, to be born up in their Arms, to be surrounded by their Tents, what a Security is the Ministration of those good Spirits against the Malice of Evil Spirits? This Honour have all they that wait on God all the Day.

5. This Life of Communion with God, and constant Attendance upon him is a Heaven upon Earth. 'Tis doing the Work of Heaven, and the Will of God, as they do it that are in Heaven; whole Business it is always to behold the Face of our Father. It is an earnest of the Blessedness of Heaven, 'tis a Preparative for it, and a Preludium to it; it is having our Conversation in Heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour. Looking for him as our Saviour, we look to him as our Director; and by this we make it appear, that our Hearts
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How to Spend the Day with God. 81

are there, which will give us good Ground to expect that we *shall be there* shortly.

Thirdly, Let me close with some *Directions*, what you must do, that you may thus wait on God all the Day.

1. See much of God in every Creature. Of his Wisdom and Power in the *making* and *placing* of it, and of his Goodness in its *serviceableness* to us. Look about you, and see what a variety of *Wonders*, what an abundance of *Comforts* you are surrounded with; and let them all lead you to him, who is the *Fountain of Being*, and the *Giver of all Good*; all our Springs are in him, and from him are all our Streams; this will engage us to wait on him, since every Creature is that to us, that he makes it to be. Thus the same things which draw a carnal Heart from God, will lead a gracious Soul to him; and since all his Works praise him, his Saints will from hence take continual occasion to bless him.

It was (they say) the Custom of the pious Jews of old, whatever Delight they took in any Creature, to give to God the Glory of it; when they smell'd a Flower, they said, *Blessed be he that made this Flower sweet*; if they eat a Morsel of Bread, *Blessed be he that appointed Bread to strengthen Man's Heart*. If thus we tast in every thing that the Lord is gracious, and suck all Satisfaction from the Breasts of his Bounty, (and some derive his Name, *יְיָ* from *יָמָא* Mamma) we shall thereby be engag'd constantly to depend on him, as the Child is said to hang on the Mother's Breast.

2. See every Creature to be nothing without God; the more we discern of the Vanity and Emptiness of the World, and all our Enjoyments in it, and their utter Insufficiency to make us happy,

82 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

the closer we shall cleave to God, and the more intimately we shall converse with him, that we may find that Satisfaction in the Father of Spirits, which we have in vain sought for in the Things of Sense. What Folly is it to *make our Court* to the Creatures, and to *dance Attendance* at their Door, whence we are sure to be sent away empty, when we have the Creator himself to go to, who is *rich in Mercy to all that call upon him*, is *full*, and *free*, and *faithful*. What can we expect from *lying Vanities*? Why then should we *observe them*, and neglect *our own Mercies*? Why should we trust to *broken Reeds*, when we have a *Rock of Ages*, to be the *Foundation of our Hopes*? And why should we draw from *broken Cisterns*, when we have the *God of all Consolation* to be the *Foundation of our Joys*.

3. *Live by Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.* We cannot with any Confidence wait upon God, but in and through a Mediator, for 'tis by his Son that God speaks to us, and hears from us: All that passeth between a just God and poor Sinners, must pass through the Hands of that Blessed *Day-man*, who has laid his Hand upon them both; every Prayer passeth from us to God, and every Mercy from God to us by that Hand; 'tis in the *Face of the Anointed*, that God looks upon us; and in the *Face of Jesus Christ*, that we behold the *Glory and Grace of God shining*; 'tis by Christ that we have *Access to God*, and *Success with him* in Prayer, and therefore must *make mention of his Righteousness, even of his only*; and in that habitual Attendance we must be all the Day giving upon God, we must have an habitual Dependence on him, who *always appears in the Presence of God for us*; always gives Attendance to be ready to introduce us.

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4. *Be frequent and serious in pious Ejaculations.*

In waiting upon God we must often speak to him, must take all Occasions to speak to him; and when we have not Opportunity for a solemn Address to him, he will accept of a sudden Address, if it come from an honest Heart. In these *David waited on God all Day*, as appears by *v. 1. Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my Soul*; to thee do I dart it, and all its gracious Breathings after thee. We should in a Holy Ejaculation ask pardon for *this Sin*, Strength against *this Corruption*, Victory over *this Temptation*, and it shall not be *in vain*. This is to *pray always*, and *without ceasing*; 'tis not the Length or Language of the Prayer that God looks at, but the Sincerity of the Heart in it; and that shall be accepted, tho' the Prayer be very short, and the *Groanings* such as *cannot be uttered*.

5. *Look upon every Day, as those who know not but it may be your last Day.* At such an Hour as we think not, the Son of Man comes; and therefore we cannot any Morning be sure, that we shall live till Night; we hear of many *lately* that have been snatch'd away very suddenly, *what manner of Persons therefore ought we to be in all Holy Conversation and Godliness.* Tho' we cannot say, we ought to live as if we were sure this Day would be our last, yet 'tis certain, we ought to live as those who do not know but it may be so; and the rather, because we know the Day of the Lord will come first or last; and therefore we are concern'd to *wait on him*. For on whom should poor *dying* Creatures wait, but on a *living* God.

Death will *bring us all to God*, to be judged by him; 'twill bring all the Saints *to him*, to the Vision and Fruition of him: And one we are
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84 *How to Spend the Day with God.*

hastning to, and hope to be for ever with, we are concern'd to *wait upon*, and to cultivate an Acquaintance with. Did we think more of Death, we would converse more with God; our *dying daily*, is a good reason for our *worshipping daily*; and therefore where-ever we are, we are concern'd to keep near to God, because we know not where Death will meet us: This will alter the Property of Death; *Enoch*, that *walked with God*, was translated that he *should not see Death*; and this will furnish us with that which will stand us in stead on 'tother side Death and the Grave. If we continue waiting on God *every Day*, and *all the Day long*, we shall grow more *experienc'd*, and consequently more *expert* in the great Mystery of Communion with God, and thus our last Days will become our best Days, our last Works our best Works, and our last Comforts our sweetest Comforts: In Consideration of which take the Prophet's Advice; *Hos. 12. 6. Turn thou to thy God; keep Mercy and Judgment, and wait on thy God continually.*

T H E

THE
Third Discourse.

SHEWING
How to Close the Day with
G O D.

PSALM IV. viii.

*I will both lay me down in Peace, and
sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me
dwell in safety.*

THIS may be understood either *figu-
ratively*, of the Repose of *the Soul* in
the Assurances of God's Grace; or *li-
terally*, of the Repose of *the Body* un-
der the Protection of his Providence; I love to
give Scripture its full Latitude, and therefore
take in both.

I. The

86 *How to Close the Day with God.*

1. The Psalmist having given the Preference to God's Favour above any Good, having *chosen* that, and *portion'd himself* in that, here expresth his great Complacency in the Choice he had made; while he saw many making themselves *perpetually uneasie* with that fruitless Enquiry, *who will shew us any good?* wearying themselves for very Vanity: He had made himself *perfectly easie*, by casting himself upon the Divine good Will, *Lord, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us:* Any Good, short of God's Favour, will not serve our turn, but that's enough, without *the World's Smiles:* The Moon, and Stars, and all the Fires and Candles in the World, will not *make Day* without the Sun; but the Sun will *make Day* without any of them. These are *David's* Sentiments, and all the Saints agree with him: Finding no Rest therefore, like *Noah's Dove*, in a delug'd defiled World, he flies to the Ark, that Type of Christ, *Return unto thy Rest*, unto thy *Noah*, (so the Word is in the Original, for *Noah's Name* signifies *Rest*) *O my Soul*, Psal. 116. 7.

If God *lift up the Light of his Countenance* upon us, as it fills us with a *Holy Joy*, it *puts Gladness into the Heart* more than they have, *whose Corn and Wine increaseth*, v. 7. so it *fixeth us in a Holy Rest*, I will now *lay me down and sleep*. God is my God, and I am pleas'd, I am satisfied, I look no further, I desire no more, *I dwell in Safety:* Or in *Confidence*; while I walk in the Light of the Lord, as I *want no Good*, nor am sensible of any *Deficiency*, so I *fear no Evil*, nor am apprehensive of any *Danger*. The Lord God is to me both a *Sun* and a *Shield*; a *Sun* to enlighten and comfort me, a *Shield* to protect and defend me.

Hence

How to Close the Day with God. 87

Hence learn, *That those who have the Assurances of God's Favour towards them, may enjoy and should labour after, a holy Serenity, and Security of Mind.* We have both these put together in that precious Promise, *Isaiah 32. 17. But the Work of Righteousness shall be Peace*; there is a present Satisfaction in doing good; and in the issue, *the Effect of Righteousness shall be Quietness and Assurance for ever*; Quietness in the Enjoyment of Good, and Assurance in a Freedom from Evil.

1. A *Holy Serenity* is one blessed Fruit of God's Favour; *I will now lay me down in Peace and sleep.* While we are under God's Displeasure, or in doubt concerning his Favour, how can we have any Enjoyment of our selves! while this great Concern is *unsettled*, the Soul cannot but be *unsatisfied*. Hath God a Controversie with thee? *Give not sleep to thine Eyes, nor slumber to thine Eye-lids,* 'till thou hast got the Controversie taken up; *Go humble thy self, and make sure thy Friend,* thy best Friend, *Prov. 6. 34.* and when thou hast made thy Peace with him, and hast some comfortable Evidence that thou art accepted of him, then say wisely and justly, what that carnal Worldling said foolishly, and without ground, *Soul, take thy ease,* for in God, and in the Covenant of Grace, *thou hast Goods laid up for many Years,* Goods laid up for Eternity, *Luke 12. 19.* Are thy Sins pardon'd? Hast thou an Interest in Christ's Mediation? Doth God now in him accept thy Works? *Go thy way, eat thy Bread with Joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry Heart,* *Eccl. 2. 7.* Let this still every Storm and Command, and create a calm in thy Soul.

Having God to be our God in Covenant, we have enough, we have all; and tho' the gracious

88 *How to Close the Day with God.*

ous Soul still desires *more of God*, it never desires *more than God*; in him it reposeth it self with a perfect Complacency; in him it is *at home*, it is *at rest*; if we be but satisfied of his loving Kindness, we may be satisfied *with* his loving Kindness, *abundantly satisfied*: There is enough in this to *satiare the weary Soul*, and to *replenish every sorrowful Soul*, Jer. 31. 25. *to fill even the hungry with good things*, with the best things; and being fill'd, they should be *at rest*, at rest for ever, and their sleep here should be sweet.

2. A *Holy Security* is another blessed Fruit of God's Favour. *Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in Safety*; when the Light of thy Countenance shines upon me I am *safe*, and I know I am so, and am therefore *easie*, for *with thy Favour wilt thou compass me as with a Shield*, Psal. 5. 12. Being taken under the Protection of the Divine Favour, *Tho' an Host of Enemies should encamp against me, yet my Heart shall not fear, in this I will be confident*, Psal. 27. 3. Whatever God has promis'd me, I can promise my self, and that's enough to *indemnifie* me, and *save me harmless*, whatever Difficulties and Dangers I may meet with in the way of my Duty. *Tho' the Earth be remov'd, yet will not we fear*, Psal. 46. 2. not fear any Evil, no not *in the Valley of the Shadow of Death*, in the Territories of the King of Terrors himself, for there *thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me*. What the Rich Man's *Wealth* is to him, in his own Conceit, a *strong City*, and a *high Wall*, that the Good Man's God is to him, Prov. 18. 10, 11. *The Almighty shall be thy Gold, thy Defence*, Job 22. 25. Marg.

Nothing is more dangerous than *Security in a sinful way*, and Mens crying Peace, Peace, to themselves, while they continue under the reign-

How to Close the Day with God. 89

ing Power of a vain and carnal Mind: O that the Sinners that are at ease were made to tremble: Nothing is more *foolish* than a *Security built upon the World*, and its Promises, for they are all Vanity and a Lye; but nothing more *reasonable* in it self, or more *advantageous* to us, than for good People to build with assurance upon the Promises of a good God; for those that keep in the way of Duty, to be *quiet from the Fear of Evil*; as those that know *no Evil shall befall them*, no *real Evil*, no Evil but what shall be made to *work for their Good*; as those that know, while they continue in their Allegiance to God as their King, they are under his Protection, under the Protection of Omnipotence it self, which enables them to bid defiance to all Malignant Powers; *If God be for us, who can be against us?* This Security even the Heathen look'd upon every honest virtuous Man to be entitled to, that's *Integer vitæ scelerisque purus*, and thought if the World should fall in pieces about his Ears, he needed not fear being lost in the Desolations of it, *Et si fractus illabatur Orbis, Impavidum ferient Ruinæ*; much more reason have Christians, that hold fast their Integrity, to lay claim to it, for *who is he*, or what is it, *that shall harm us, if we be Followers of him that is good*, in his Goodness?

Now, (1.) It is the *Privilege* of good People, that they *may be* thus easie and satisfied: This holy Serenity and Security of Mind is *allow'd* them, God gives them leave to be chearful; nay, it is promis'd them, *God will speak Peace to his People, and to his Saints*; he will fill them with Joy and Peace in believing; *his Peace shall keep their Hearts and Minds*; keep them *safe*, keep them *calm*. Nay, there is a Method appointed for their obtaining this promised Serenity and Security,

90 *How to Close the Day with God.*

curity. The Scriptures are written to them *that their Joy may be full*, and that *through Patience and Comfort of them, they may have hope*. Ordinances are instituted to be Wells of Salvation, out of which they may draw *Water with Joy*. Ministers are ordain'd to be their Comforters, and the *Helpers of their Joy*. Thus willing has God been to shew to the Heirs of Promise the *Immutability of his Counsel*, that they might have *strong Consolation*, Heb. 6. 17, 18.

(2.) It is the Duty of good People to labour after this holy Security and Serenity of Mind, and to use the Means appointed for the obtaining of it. Give not way to the disquieting Suggestions of Satan, and to those tormenting Doubts and Fears that arise in your own Souls. Study to be quiet, chide your selves for your Distrusts, charge your selves to believe, and to *hope in God, that you shall praise him*. You are in the dark concerning your selves, do as *Paul's Mariners* did, cast Anchor, and wish for the Day. Poor trembling Christian, that art *tossed with Tempests and not comforted*, try to *lay thee down in peace and sleep*; compose thy self into a sedate and even Frame; in the Name of him whom Winds and Seas obey, command down thy tumultuous Thoughts, and say, *Peace, be still*; lay that aking trembling Head of thine where the beloved Disciple laid his, *in the Bosom of the Lord Jesus*; or, if thou hast not yet attained such *Boldness of Access* to him, lay that aking trembling Heart of thine *at the Feet of the Lord Jesus*, by an intire Submission and Resignation to him, saying, *If I perish, I will perish here*; put it into his Hand by an intire Confidence in him; submit it to his Operation and Disposal, who knows how to *speak to the Heart*. And if thou art not yet
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How to Close the Day with God. 91

enter'd into this Sabbathism, as the Word is, Heb. 4. 9. *this present Rest that remaineth for the People of God, yet look upon it to be a Land of Promise, and therefore tho' it tarry, wait for it, for the Vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and shall not lye. Light is sown for the Righteous, and what is sown shall come up again at last in a Harvest of Joy.*

2. The Psalmist having done his Day's work, and perhaps fatigu'd himself with it, it being now Bed-time, and he having given good Advice to those to whom he had wish'd a good Night, to *commune with their own Hearts upon their Beds, and to offer the Evening Sacrifices of Righteousness,*

4. 5. now retires to his Chamber with this Word, *I will lay me down in peace and sleep.* That which I chose this Text for, will lead me to understand it literally, as the Disciples understood their Master, when he said, *Lazarus sleepeth, of taking rest in sleep,* John 11. 12, 13. And so we have here David's pious Thought when he was going to Bed: *As when he awakes he is still with God, he is still so when he goes to sleep, and concludes the Day, as he open'd it, with Meditations on God, and sweet Communion with him.*

It should seem David pen'd this Psalm when he was distress'd and persecuted by his Enemies; perhaps 'twas pen'd on the same occasion with the foregoing Psalm, *when he fled from Absalom his son; without were Fightings, and then no wonder that within were Fears;* yet then he puts such a Confidence in God's Protection, that he will go to Bed at his usual time, and with his usual Quietness and Chearfulness, *will compose himself as at other times:* He knows his Enemies have no Power against him, *but what is given them from above;* and

92 *How to Close the Day with God.*

and they shall have no Power given them but what is still under the Divine Check and Restraint; nor shall their Power be permitted to exert it self so far as to do him any real Mischief, and therefore he retires into the *secret Place of the Most High*, and *abides under the shadow of the Almighty*, and is very quiet in his own Mind. That will *break* a wordly Man's Heart, which will not *break* a godly Man's Sleep: Let them do their worst, saith David, *I will lay me down and sleep; the Will of the Lord be done.* Now observe here,

1. His Confidence in God; *Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in Safety*; not only makest me *safe*, but makest me to know that I am so; makest me to dwell with a *good Assurance*: 'Tis the same word that is us'd concerning him that *walks uprightly*, that he *walks surely*, Prov. 10. 9. He goes boldly *in his way*, so David here goes boldly *to his Bed*. He doth not *carelessly* as the Men of Laish, Judg. 18. 7. but *dwells at ease* in God, as the Sons of Zion, in the City of their Solemnities, when their Eyes see it a quiet Habitation, Isa. 33. 20.

There is one word in this part of the Text that is observable; thou, Lord, *only* dost secure me. Some refer it to David; even when I am *alone*, have none of my Privy-Counsellors about me to *advise* me, none of my Life-Guards to *fight* for me, yet I am under no Apprehension of Danger, while *God is with me*: The Son of David comforted himself with this, that when all his Disciples forsook him, and left him alone, yet he *was not alone*, for the Father was with him. Some weak People are afraid of being *alone*, especially *in the dark*, but a firm Belief of God's Presence with us in all Places, and that Divine Protection which

How to Close the Day with God. 93

which all good People are under, would silence those Fears, and make us ashamed of them. Nay, our being alone a peculiar People, whom God hath set apart for himself, (as it is here, v. 3.) will be our Security. A sober Singularity will be our Safety and Satisfaction, as Noah's was in the old World; Israel is a People that shall dwell alone, and not be reckon'd among the Nations, and therefore may set them all at defiance till they foolishly mingle themselves among them, Numb. 23. 9. Israel shall then dwell in safety alone, Deut. 33. 28. The more we dwell alone, the more safe we dwell. But our Translation refers it to God; Thou alone makest me to dwell safely. It is done by thee only! God in protecting his People needs not any Assistance; tho' he sometimes make use of Instruments: The Earth helped the Woman, yet he can do it without them; and when all other Refuges fail, his own Arm works Salvation; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him, Deut. 32. 12. yet that is not all, I depend on thee only to do it; therefore I am easie, and think myself safe, not because I have Hosts on my side, but purely because I have the Lord of Hosts on my side.

Thou makest me to dwell in Safety: That may look either backward or forward, or rather, both: Thou hast made to dwell in safety all day, so that the Sun has not smitten me by Day; and then it is the Language of his Thankfulness for the Mercies he had receiv'd; or, thou wilt make me to dwell in Safety all Night, that the Moon shall not smite me by Night: And then it is the Language of his Dependance upon God for further Mercies; and both these should go together; and our Eye
must

94 · *How to Close the Day with God.*

must be to God as ever the same, who was, and is, and is to come ; who *has* deliver'd, and *doth*, and *will*.

2. His *Composedness* in himself inferr'd from hence, *I will both lay me down and sleep: Simul, on pariter in pace cubabo.* They that have *their Corn and Wine increasing*, that have abundance of the Wealth and Pleasure of this World, they *lay them down and sleep* contentedly, as *Boaz at the end of the Heap of Corn*, Ruth 3. 7. But tho' I have not what they have, I can *lay me down in peace, and sleep*, as well as they. We make it to join, his *lying down*, and his *sleeping* ; I will not only *lay me down*, as one that *desires* to be composed, but will *sleep* as one that *really is* so. Some make it to intimate his falling asleep presently after he had laid him down : so well wearied was he with the Work of the Day, and so free from any of those disquieting Thoughts which would keep him from sleeping.

Now these are Words put into our Mouth with which to *compose* our selves when we retire at Night to our *Repose* ; and we should take care so to manage our selves *all Day*, especially when it draws towards Night, as that we may not be *d's-fitted*, and put out of Frame, for our Evening Devotions ; that our *Hearts* may not be overcharged either on the one hand with *surfeiting and Drunkenness*, as theirs often are that are Men of Pleasure ; or on the other hand with the *Cares of this Life*, as theirs often are that are Men of Business : But that we may have such a command both of our Thoughts, and of our Time, as that we may finish our daily Work well ; which will be an earnest of our finishing our Life's Work well ; and *all is well* indeed *that ends everlasting well*.

How to Close the Day with God. 95

Doct. As we must begin the Day with God, and wait upon him all the Day, so we must endeavour to close it with him.

This Duty of closing the Day with God, and in a good Frame, I know not how better to open to you, than by going over the Particulars in the Text in their order; and recommending to you David's Example.

First, Let us retire to lay us down: Nature calls for Rest as well as Food; Man goes forth to his Work and Labour, and goes to and fro about it, but it is only 'till Evening, and then it's time to lie down. We read of Ishbosheth, that he lay on his Bed at Noon, but Death met him there, 2 Sam. 4. 5, 6. and of David himself, that he came off from his Bed at Evening-tide, but Sin, a worse thing than Death, met him there, 2 Sam. 11. 2. We must work the Works of him that sent us while it is Day, it will be time enough to lie down when the Night comes, and no Man can work; and 'tis then proper and seasonable to lie down: 'Tis promis'd, Zeph. 2. 7. They shall lie down in the Evening, and with that Promise we must comply, and rest in the time appointed for Rest; and not turn Day into Night, and Night into Day, as many do upon some ill account or other.

1. Some sit up to do mischief to their Neighbours; to kill, and steal, and to destroy: In the dark they dig through Houses which they had mark'd for themselves in the day time, Job 24. 16. David complains of his Enemies, that at Evening they go round about the City, Psal. 59. 6. They that do Evil hate the Light. Judas the Traytor was in quest of his Master, with his Band of Men, when he should have been in his Bed. And it is an Aggravation

96 *How to Close the Day with God.*

gravation of the Wickedness of the Wicked, when they *take* so much *pains* to *compass* an ill Design; and have their Hearts so much upon it, that they *sleep not except they have done Mischief*. Prov. 4. 16. As it is a shame to those who profess to make it their Business to *do good*, that they cannot find in their Hearts to entrench upon any of the Gratifications of Sense in pursuance of it;

*Ut jugulent Homines surgunt de nocte Latrones,
Tuque ut te serves non expergisceris?*

say then, while others sit up watching for an Opportunity to be mischievous, *I will lay me down* and be quiet, and do no body any harm.

2. Others *sit up in pursuit of the World, and the Wealth of it*. They not only *rise up early*, but they *sit up late*, in the eager Prosecution of their covetous Practices, Psal. 127. 2. and either to get or *save*, deny themselves their most necessary Sleep; and *this their way is their Folly*, for hereby they deprive themselves of the comfortable Enjoyment of what they have, which is the *End*, under pretence of care and pains to obtain more, which is but the *Means*. Solomon speaks of those that *neither Day nor Night sleep with their Eyes*, Eccl. 8. 16. that make themselves perfect Slaves, and Drudges to the World, than which there is not a more cruel Task-master: and thus they make that which of it self is *Vanity*, to be to them *Vexation of Spirit*, for they *weary themselves for very Vanity*, Heb. 2. 13. and are so miserably in love with their Chain, that they deny themselves not only the *spiritual Rest* God has provided for them as the God of Grace, but the *natural Rest*, which, as the God of Nature, he has provided, and is a *Specimen* of the wrong Sin-

How to Close the Day with God. 97

ners do to their own Bodies, as well as their own Souls. Let us see the Folly of it, and never labour thus for the *Meat that perisheth*, and that abundance of the *Rich which will not suffer him to sleep*; but let us labour for that *Meat which endured to eternal Life*, that Grace which is the earnest of Glory, the Abundance of which will make our Sleep sweet to us.

3. Others sit up in the indulgence of their Pleasures; they will not lay them down in due time, because they cannot find in their Hearts to leave their vain Sports and Pastimes, their Musick, and Dancing, and Plays, their Cards and Dice; or which is worse, their Rioting and Excess; for they that are drunk are drunk in the Night. 'Tis bad enough when these Gratifications of a base Lust, or at least of a vain Mind, are suffer'd to devour the whole Evening, and then to engross the whole Soul, as they are apt enough to do insensibly; so that there is neither Time nor Heart for the Evening-Devotions, either in the Closet, or in the Family: But 'tis much worse when they are suffer'd to go far into the Night too, for then of course they trespass upon the ensuing Morning, and steal away the time that should then also be bestow'd upon the Exercises of Religion. Those that can of choice, and with so much pleasure sit up till I know not what time of Night, to make, as they say, a merry Night of it, to spend their time in filthiness, and foolish talking, and jesting, which are not convenient, would think themselves hardly dealt with, if they should be kept one half hour past their sleeping time, engag'd in any good Duties, and would have call'd blessed Paul himself a long winded Preacher, and have censur'd him as very indiscreet, when, upon a particular occasion he continued his Speech till Midnight,

98 *How to Close the Day with God.*

Acts 20. 7. And how loth would they be with David at Midnight, to rise and give thanks to God ; or with their Master, to continue all Night in Prayer to God.

Let the corrupt Affections, which run out thus and transgress, be mortified, and not gratified. Those that have allow'd themselves in such Irregularities ; if they have allow'd themselves an impartial Reflection, cannot but have found the Inconvenience of them, and that they have been a Prejudice to the Prosperity of the Soul, and should therefore deny themselves for their own good. One Rule for the closing of the Day well, is to keep good Hours : Every thing is beautiful in its season. I have heard it said long since, and I beg leave to repeat it now, that

*Early to Bed, and early to Rise,
Is the way to be Healthy, and Wealthy, and Wise.*

We shall now take it for granted, that unless some necessary Business, or some Work of Mercy, or some more than ordinary Act of Devotion, keep you up beyond your usual Time ; you are dispos'd to lay you down. And let us lay us down with Thankfulness to God, and with Thoughts of dying ; with Penitent Reflections upon the Sins of the Day ; and with humble Supplications for the Mercies of the Night.

1. Let us lie down with Thankfulness to God. When we retire to our Bed-chambers, or Closets, we should lift up our Hearts to God, the God of our Mercies, and make him the God of our Praises ; whenever we go to Bed, I am sure we do not want Matter for Praise, if we do not want a Heart. Let us therefore address our selves then to that pleasant Duty, that Work which is its own Wages.

How to Close the Day with God. 99

Wages. The Evening Sacrifice was to be a Sacrifice of Praise.

(1.) We have reason to be thankful for *the many Mercies of the Day past*, which we ought particularly to review, and to say, *Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with his Benefits.* Observe the *constant series of Mercies*, which has not been interrupted, or broken in upon any Day. Observe the *particular Instances of Mercy* with which some Days have been *signaliz'd* and made remarkable. 'Tis he that has *granted us Life and Favour*; 'tis his *Visitation* that *preserves our Spirits.* Think how many are the *Calamities* we are every Day *preserved from*; the *Calamities* which we are *sensibly exposed to*, and perhaps have been *deliver'd* from the imminent Danger of; and those which we have not been *apprehensive of*; many of which we have *deserv'd*, and which others, better than we are, *groan under.* All our Bones have reason to say, *Lord, who is like unto thee?* For it is God that *keepeth all our Bones, not one of them is broken*: 'Tis of his Mercies that we are not consum'd.

Think how many are the *Comforts* we are every Day *surrounded with*, all which we are indebted to the Bounty of the Divine Providence for; every Bit we eat, and every Drop we drink, is Mercy; every Step we take, and every Breath we draw, Mercy. All the Satisfaction we have in the Agreeableness and Affections of our Relations, and in the Society and Serviceableness of our Friends: All the Success we have in our Callings and Employments, and the Pleasure we take in them: All the *Joy* which *Zebulun* has in his *going out*, and *Issachar* in his *Tents*, is what we have reason to acknowledge with thankfulness to God's Praise.

100 *How to Close the Day with God.*

Yet 'tis likely the Day has not past without some cross Accidents, something or other has afflicted and disappointed us, and if it has, yet that must not indispose us for Praise; *however it be, yet God is good*; and it is our Duty *in every thing to give thanks, and to bless the Name of the Lord* when he takes away, as well as when he gives; for our Afflictions are but *few*, and a thousand times *deserv'd*; our Mercies are *many*, and a thousand times *forfeited*.

(2.) We have reason to be thankful for the *shadows of the Evening, which call us to retire and lye down*. The same Wisdom, Power and Goodness that *makes the Morning*, makes the *Evening* also to *rejoice*; and gives us cause to be thankful for the drawing of the Curtains of the Night about us in favour to our *Repose*, as well as for the opening of the Eye-lids of the Morning upon us in favour to our *Business*. When God *divided between the Light and the Darknes*, and allotted to both of them their Time successively, he saw that *it was good*, it should be so; in a World of Mixtures and Changes, nothing more *proper*. Let us therefore give thanks to that God who *forms the Light, and creates the Darknes*; and believe, that as in the Revolutions of Time, so in the Revolutions of the Events of Time, the Darknes of Affliction may be as needful for us in its season, as the Light of Prosperity. If the *Hireling* longs till the *shadow* comes, let him be thankful for it when it doth come, that the burthen and heat of the Day is not *perpetual*.

(3.) We have reason to be thankful for a *quiet Habitation to lye down in*; that we are not driven out from among *Men* as *Nebuchadnezzar*, to lye down with the *Beasts of the Field*; that tho' we were born like the *wild Asses* *Celt*, yet we have

not

How to Close the Day with God. 101

not with the wild *As* the *Wilderness* for our *Habitation*, and the *Desolate and Barren Land* for our *Dwelling*. That we are not to wander in *Deserts and Mountains*, in *Dens and Caves of the Earth*, as many of God's dear Saints and Servants have been forc'd to do, of *whom the World was not worthy*: But the good Shepherd makes us *lye down in green Pastures*: That we have not, as *Jacob*, the cold *Ground* for our *Bed*, and a *Stone* for our *Pillow*, which yet one would be content with, and covet, if with it one could have his *Dream*.

(4.) We have reason to be thankful *that we are not forc'd to sit up*; that our Master not only gives us leave to *lye down*, but orders that nothing shall prevent our *lying down*. Many go to *Bed*, but cannot *lye down* there, by reason of painful and languishing *Sicknesses*, of that Nature, that if they *lye down* they cannot breathe: Our *Bodies* are of the same Mould, and it is of the Lord's Mercies that we are so not Afflicted. Many are kept up by *Sickness* in their Families; Children are Ill, and they must attend them: If God takes *sickness away from the midst of us*, and keeps it away, so that *no Plague comes near our Dwellings*, a numerous Family perhaps, and all well, 'tis a Mercy we are bound to be very thankful for, and to value in proportion to the greatness of the Affliction where *Sickness prevails*. Many are kept up by the fear of *Enemies*, of *Soldiers*, of *Thieves*: The *Good Man of the House* watcheth, that his *House may not be broken through*; but our *lying down* is not prevented or disturb'd by the *Alarms of War*, we are deliver'd from the *noise of Archers* in the Places of our *Repose*, there therefore should we rehearse the *righteous Acts of the Lord*, even his *righteous Acts towards the Inhabitants of his Villages in Israel*, which under his

102 *How to Close the Day with God.*

Protection are as safe as Walled Cities with Gates and Bars. When we lye down, let us thank God that we *may lye down.*

2. Let us lye down *with Thoughts of Death*, and of that great Change which at Death we must pass under. The Conclusion of every Day should put us in mind of the Conclusion of all our Days; when our Night comes, our long Night, which will put a Period to our Work, and bring the *honest Labourer* both to *take his Rest*, and *receive his Penny.* 'Tis good for us to think *frequently* of dying, to think of it as oft as we go to Bed; 'twill help to mortifie the Corruptions of our own Hearts, which are our daily Burthens, to arm us against the Temptations of the World, which are our daily Snares; 'twill wean us from our daily Comforts, and make us easie under our daily Crosses and Fatigues. 'Tis good for us to think *familiarly* of dying, to think of it as our *going to Bed*, that by thinking *often* of it, and thinking *thus* of it, we may get above the *fear of it.*

(1.) At Death we shall retire, as we do at Bed-time; we shall go to be private for a while, till the publick Appearance at the great Day; Man lieth down, and riseth not till the Heavens be no more; till then they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep, Job. 14. 12. Now we go abroad to see and be seen, and to no higher Purpose do some spend their Day, spend their Life; but when Death comes, there's an end of both; we shall then see no more in this World, I shall behold Man no more, Isa. 38. 11. we shall then be seen no more; the Eye of him that hath seen me, shall see me no more; Job 7. 8. we shall be bid in the Grave, and cut off from all living. To die is to bid good Night to all our Friends, to put a Period to our Conversation with them;
we

How to Close the Day with God. 103

we bid them Farewel, but blessed be God, 'tis not an *Eternal* Farewel. We hope to meet them again in the Morning of the Resurrection, to part no more.

(2.) At Death we shall put off the Body, as we put off our Clothes when we lie down. The Soul is the Man, the Body is but Clothes; at Death we shall be *uncloth'd*, the *earthly House of this Tabernacle* shall be *dissolv'd*, the Garment of the Body shall be laid aside; Death *strips us*, and sends us *Naked* out of the World, as we came into it; strips the Soul of all the Disguises wherein it appear'd before Men, that it may appear *naked and open* before God. Our *Grave-clothes* are *Night-clothes*.

When we are *weary and hot*, our Clothes are a Burthen, and we are very willing to throw them off; are not *easie* till we are *undress'd*; ~~then~~ we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being *burthen'd*; but when Death frees the Soul from the Load and Encumbrance of the Body, which hinders its repose in its spiritual Satisfactions, how easie will it be? Let us *think* then of putting off the Body at Death with as much *Pleasure*, as we do of *putting off* our Clothes at Night; be as *loose* to them, as we are to our Clothes; and comfort our selves with this Thought, that tho' we are *unclothed* at Death, if we be clothed with Christ and his Grace, we shall not be found *naked*, but be *clothed upon with Immortality*. We have new Clothes a making, which shall be ready to put on next Morning; a *glorious Body* like Christ's, instead of a *vile Body* like the Beasts.

(3.) At Death we shall *lye down in the Grave*, as our *Bed*, shall *lye down in the Dust*; Job. 20. 11. To those that die in Sin, and impenitent, the Grave is a *Dungeon*, their *Iniquities* which are

104 *How to Close the Day with God.*

upon *their Bones*, and which *lye down with them*, make it so; but to those that die in *Christ*, that die in *Faith*, it is a *Bed*, a *Bed of Rest*, where there is no *tossings to and fro* until the *dawning of the Day*, as sometimes there are upon the easiest Beds we have in this *World*; where there is no danger of being *scar'd with Dreams*, and *terrified with Visions of the Night*; there's no being *chasten'd with Pain on that Bed*, or the *multitude of the Bones with strong pain*. 'Tis the *Privilege of those*, who while they live *walk in their uprightness*, that when they die they *enter into Peace*, and *rest in their Beds*, Isa. 57 2. Holy *Job* comforts himself with this, in the midst of his *Agonies*, that he shall shortly *make his Bed in the Darknes*, and be easie there. 'Tis a *Bed of Roses*, a *Bed of Spices* to all *Believers* ever since he lay in it, who ~~in the~~ *Rose of Sharon*, and *the Lilly of the Vallies*.

Say then of thy *Grave*, as thou dost of thy *Bed at Night*, *there the weary are at rest*; with this further *Consolation*, that thou shalt not only *rest there*, but *rise thence* shortly, abundantly *refreshed*; shalt be call'd up to meet the *Beloved of thy Soul*, and to be *for ever with him*; shalt rise to a *Day* which will not *renew thy Cares*, as every *Day on Earth* doth, but *secure to thee unmix'd and everlasting Joys*. How comfortably may we lie down *at Night*, if such *Thoughts* as these lie down with us? and how comfortably may we lie down *at Death*, if we have *accustom'd our selves to such Thoughts* as these.

3. Let us lie down with *Penitent Reflections upon the Sins of the Day past*. Praising God and Delighting our selves in him is such pleasant *Work*, and so much the *Work of Angels*, that methinks 'tis *Pity* we should have *any Thing else*

to do; but the Truth is, we *make other Work* for our selves by our own Folly; that is not so pleasant but absolutely *needful*, and that is *Repentance*. While we are at Night *solacing our selves* in God's Goodness, yet we must intermix therewith the *afflicting of our selves* for our own Badness; both must have *their Place* in us, and they will very well agree together; for we must take our Work before us.

(1.) We must *be convinced of it*, that we are *still contracting Guilt*; we carry corrupt Natures about with us, which are bitter Roots that bear *Gaul and Wormwood*, and all we say or do is embitter'd by them. *In many Things we all offend*, insomuch that *there is not a just Man upon Earth that doth good and sins not*. We are in the midst of a defiling World, and cannot keep our selves perfectly *unspotted from it*. If we say we have no Sin, or that we have past a Day and have not sinned, *we deceive our selves*, for if we *know the Truth by our selves*, we shall see Cause to cry, *Who can understand his Errors? Cleanse us from our secret Faults*; Faults which we our selves are not aware of. We ought to aim at a sinless Perfection, with as strict a Watchfulness as if we could attain it: But after all must acknowledge, that we come short of it; that *we have not yet attained, neither are already perfect*. We find it by constant sad Experience, for 'tis certain we do enough every Day to bring us upon our Knees at Night.

(2.) We must *examine our Consciences*, that we may find out our particular Transgressions the Day past. Let us every Night *search and try our Ways*, our Thoughts, Words, and Actions, compare them with the Rule of the Word, look our Faces in that Glass, that we may *see our Spots*, and

106 *How to Close the Day with God.*

may be particular in the Acknowledgment of them. 'Twill be good for us to ask, *What have we done this Day?* What have we done amiss? What Duty have we neglected? What false Step have we taken? How have we carried it in our Callings, in our Converse? Have we done the Duties of our particular Relations, and accommodated our selves to the Will of God in every Event of Providence. By doing this frequently, we shall grow in our *Acquaintance with our selves*, than which nothing will contribute more to our Soul's Prosperity.

(3.) We must *renew our Repentance*, for whatever we find has been amiss in us, or has been said or done amiss by us. We must be *serry* for it, and sadly *lament* it, and take *shame* to our selves for it, and give Glory to God by *making Confession*. If any thing appear to have been wrong more than ordinary, that must be *particularly* bewail'd; and in *general*, we must be mortified for our *Sins of daily Infirmary*, which we ought not to think slightly of, because they are returning daily, but rather be the more ashamed of them, and of that Fountain within, which *casts out these Waters*.

'Tis good to be *speedy* in renewing our Repentance; before the Heart be harden'd by the Deceitfulness of Sin. Delays are dangerous: Green Wounds may soon be cur'd, if taken in time, but if they *stink* and *are corrupt*, as the Psalmist complains, *Psalms* 38. 5. it is our Fault and Folly, and the Cure will be difficult. Tho' through the weakness of the Flesh we *fall* into Sin daily, if we get up again by renewed Repentance at Night, we are not, nor ought we to think our selves *utterly cast down*. The Sin that *humbles* us, shall not *ruin* us.

(4.) We

How to Close the Day with God. 107

(4.) We must make a fresh Application of the Blood of Christ to our Souls for the Remission of our Sins, and the gracious Acceptance of our Repentance. We must not think that we have need of Christ only at our first Conversion to God; No, we have daily need of him, as our Advocate with the Father, and therefore as such he always appears in the Presence of God for us, and attends continually to this very Thing. Even our Sins of daily Infirmary would be our Ruin, if he had not made Satisfaction for them, and did not still make Intercession for us. He that is washed, still needeth to wash his Feet, from the Filth he contracts in every Step; and blessed be God, there is a Fountain open'd for us to wash in, and 'tis always open.

(5.) We must apply our selves to the Throne of Grace for Peace and Pardon. Those that repent must pray, that the Thought of their Heart may be forgiven them, Acts 8. 22. And it is good to be particular in our Prayers for the Pardon of Sin; that as Hannah said concerning Samuel, For this Child I pray'd; so we may be able to say, for the Forgiveness of this I pray'd. However, the Publicans Prayer in general, is a very proper one for each of us to lie down with, God be merciful to me a Sinner:

4. Let us lie down with humble Supplications for the Mercies of the Night. Prayer is as necessary in the Evening, as it was in the Morning, for we have the same need of the Divine Favour and Care, to make the Evening out-goings to rejoice, that we had to beautifie thole of the Morning.

(1.) We must pray, that our outward Man may be under the Care of God's Holy Angels, who are the Ministers of his Providence. God hath pro-

108 *How to Close the Day with God.*

promis'd, that he will give his *Angels* charge concerning those who make the *most High* their *Refuge*, and that they shall *pitch their Tents* round about them and deliver them; and what he hath promis'd, we may and must *pray for*; not as if God needed the Service of the Angels, or as if he did himself *quit* all the Care of his People, and turn it over to them: But it appears by abundance of Scripture Proofs, that they are *employ'd* about the People of God, whom he takes under his special Protection, tho' they are not *seen*, both for the Honour of God *by whom* they are charg'd, and for the Honour of the Saints *with whom* they are charg'd. It was the Glory of Solomon's Bed, that *threescore valiant Men* were about it, of the *valiant* of Israel, all holding *Swords*, because of Fear in the Night, Cant. 3. 7, 8. But much more honourably and comfortably are all true Believers attended, for tho' they lie never so *meanly*, they have Hosts of Angels surrounding their Beds, and by the Ministration of good Spirits are preserv'd from malignant Spirits. But God will for this be enquir'd of by the House of Israel; Christ himself must *pray the Father*, and he will send to his Relief *Legions of Angels*, Mat. 26. 53. Much more reason have we to ask, that it may be given us.

(2.) We must pray, That our *inward Man* may be under the Influences of his Holy Spirit, who is the Author and Fountain of his Grace. As *Publick Ordinances* are Opportunities in which the Spirit works upon the Hearts of Men, and therefore when we attend on them, we must pray for the Spirit's Operations, so are *Private Retirements*, and therefore we must put up the same Prayer, when we enter upon them. We find, that in *slumberings upon the Bed*, God openeth
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How to Close the Day with God. 109

the Ears of Men, and sealeth their Instruction, Job 33. 15, 16. And with this David's Experiences concur, He found that God visited him in the Night, and tried him, and so discovered him to himself, Psalm 17. 3. And that God gave him Counsel, and his Reins instructed him in the Night-season, and so he discover'd himself to him, Psalm 16. 7. He found that was a proper Season for remembering God, and meditating upon him; and in order to our due Improvement of this proper Season for conversing with God in Solitude, we need the powerful and benign Influences of the Blessed Spirit, which therefore when we lie down we should earnestly pray for, and humbly put our selves under, and submit our selves to. How God's Grace may work upon us, when we are asleep we know not; the Soul will act in a State of Separation from the Body, and how far it doth act independent on the Body, when the bodily Senses are all lock'd up, we cannot say, but are sure, that the Spirit of the Lord is not bound; we have reason to pray, not only that our Minds may not be either disturb'd or polluted by evil Dreams, in which, for ought we know, evil Spirits sometimes have a Hand, but may be instructed and quieted by good Dreams, which Plutarch reckons among the Evidences of Increase and Proficiency in Virtue, and on which the good Spirit has an Influence. I have heard of a good Man, that us'd to pray at Night for good Dreams.

Secondly, When we lay us down, our Care and Endeavour must be to lay us down in Peace. It is promis'd to Abraham, that he shall go to his Grave in Peace, Gen. 15. 15. and this Promise is sure to all his spiritual Seed, for the End of the upright Man is Peace; Josiah dies in Peace, tho' he is kill'd in a Battle; now as an earnest of this

110 *How to Close the Day with God.*

let us every Night *lie down in Peace*. 'Tis threatened to the Wicked, that they shall *lie down in Sorrow*, Isa. 50. 11. 'Tis promis'd to the Righteous, that they shall lie down, and *none shall make them afraid*, Lev. 26. 6. Job. 11. 19. Let us then enter into this Rest, this blessed Sabbathism, and take Care that we come not short of it.

1. Let us lie down *in Peace with God*; for without this there can be *no Peace* at all; *There is no Peace, saith my God, to the Wicked*, whom God is at War with. A State of Sin is a State of Enmity against God; they that continue in that State are under the Wrath and Curse of God, and cannot *lie down in Peace*; What have they to do with Peace? Hasten therefore (Sinner) hasten to make thy Peace with God in Jesus Christ, by Repentance and Faith; *take hold on his Strength, that thou mayst make Peace with him, and thou shalt make Peace*, for *Fury is not with him*. Conditions of Peace are offer'd, consent to them; close with him who is *our Peace*; take Christ upon *his own Terms*, Christ upon *any Terms*. Defer not to do this; dare not to *sleep* in that Condition, in which thou dardest not *die*. *Escape for thy Life, look not behind thee. Acquaint now thy self with him, now presently, and be at Peace*, and thereby this good shall come unto thee, thou shalt *lie down in Peace*.

Sin is ever and anon *making Mischief* between God and our Souls, provoking God against us, alienating us from God, we therefore need to be every Night *making Peace*, reconciling our selves to him and to his Holy Will, by the Agency of his Spirit upon us, and begging of him to be reconcil'd to us, through the Intercession of his Son for us; that there may be no Distance, no Strangeness between us and God, no interposing
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How to Close the Day with God. III

Cloud to hinder his Mercies from coming down upon us, or our Prayers from coming up unto him. *Being justified by Faith*, we have this *Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*, and then we may not only lie down in Peace; but we rejoice in hope of the Glory of God. Let this be our first Care, that God have no quarrel with us, nor we with him.

2. Let us lie down in *Peace with all Men*; we are concern'd to go to sleep, as well as to go to die in *Charity*. Those that converse much with the World can scarce pass a Day, but something or other happens that is *provoking*, some Affront is given them, some Injury done them, at least they so think; when they retire at Night and reflect upon it, they are apt to magnifie the Offence, and while they are musing on it the Fire burns, their Resentments rise, and they begin to say, *I will do so to him as he has done to me*; Prov. 24. 29. Then is the time of ripening the Passion into a rooted Malice, and meditating Revenge; then therefore let Wisdom and Grace be set on work, to *extinguish* this Fire from Hell before it get Head, then let this Root of Bitterness be kill'd and pluck'd up; and let the Mind be dispos'd to forgive the Injury, and to *think well* of, and *wish well* to him that did it. If others incline to quarrel with us, yet let us resolve not to quarrel with them. Let us resolve that whatever the Affront or Injury was, it shall neither *disquiet* our Spirits, nor *make us to fret*, which Peninnah aim'd at in provoking Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 6. nor *sow* or *embitter* our Spirits, or make us *pievish* and *spiteful*: But that we still *love our selves*, and *love our Neighbours as our selves*, and therefore not by harbouring Malice, do any wrong to *our selves* or *our Neighbour*. And we shall find it much easier
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112 *How to Close the Day with God.*

in it self, and much more pleasant in the Reflection to *forgive Twenty Injuries* than to *avenge one.*

That it should be our particular Care at Night, to reconcile our selves to those who have been injurious to us, is intimated in that Charge, *Eph. 4. 26. Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath.* If your Passion has not cool'd before, let it be abated by the cool of the Evening, and quite disappear with the setting Sun. You are then to go to Bed, and if you lie down with these unmortified Passions boiling in your Breasts, your Soul is among Lions, you lie down in a Bed of Thorns, in a Nest of Scorpions. Nay, some have observ'd from what follows immediately, *Neither give place to the Devil, v. 27. That those who go to Bed in Malice, have the Devil for their Bed-fellow.* We cannot lie down at Peace with God, unless we be at Peace with Men; nor in Faith pray to be forgiven, unless we forgive. Let us therefore study the Things that make for Peace, for the Peace of our own Spirits, by living as much as in us lies *peaceably with all Men.* I am for Peace, yea, tho' they are for War.

3. Let us lie down in Peace with our selves, with our Minds, with a sweet Composedness of Spirit and Enjoyment of our selves; *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul,* and be easie; let nothing disturb my Soul, my Darling.

But when may we lie down in Peace? At Night.

1. If we have by the Grace of God in some measure done the Work of the Day, and fill'd it up with Duty, we may then lie down in Peace at Night. If we have the Testimony of our Consciences for us, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God we have this Day had our Conversation in the World,

that

How to Close the Day with God. 113

that we have done some good in our Places, something that will turn to a good Account ; if our Hearts do not-reproach us with a *Diem perdidit*, Alas, *I have lost a Day*; or with that which is worse, the spending of that Time in the Service of Sin, which should have been spent in the Service of God ; but if on the contrary we have abode with God, have been *in his Fear*, and waited on him all the Day long, we may then lie down in Peace, for God saith, *Well done, good and faithful Servant*; and the sleep of the labouring Man, of the labouring Christian is sweet, is very sweet, when he can say, as I am a Day's Journey nearer my End, so I am a Day's Work fitter for it. Nothing will make our Bed-chambers pleasant, and our Beds easie, like the Witness of the Spirit of God with our Spirits, that we are going forward for Heaven; and a Conscience kept void of Offence, which will be not only a continual Feast,* but a continual Rest.

2. If we have by Faith and Patience, and Submission to the Divine Will reconcil'd our selves to all the Events of the Day, so as to be uneasie at nothing that God has done, we may then lie down in Peace at Night. Whatever hath fallen out cross to us, it shall not fret us, but we will kiss the Rod, take up the Cross, and say, *All is well that God doth*. Thus we must in our Patience keep Possession of our own Souls, and not suffer any Affliction to put us out of the Possession of them. We have met with Disappointments, in Husbandry perhaps, in Trade, at Sea, Debtors prove insolvent, Creditors prove severe, but this and the other proceedeth from the Lord, there is a Providence in it, every Creature is what God makes it to be, and therefore *I am dumb, I open not my Mouth*: That which pleaseth God, ought not to displease me.

3. I

114 *How to Close the Day with God.*

3. If we have *renew'd our Repentance for Sin*, and made a *fresh Application of the Blood of Christ to our Souls* for the *purifying of our Consciences*, we may then *lay us down in Peace*. Nothing can break in upon our Peace but Sin, that's it that *troubles the Camp*; if that be taken away, there shall *no Evil befall us*. The *Inhabitant*, tho' he be far from well, yet *shall not say I am sick*, shall not complain of *Sickness*, for the *People that dwell therein shall be forgiven their Iniquity*, Isa. 33. 22. The Pardon of Sin has enough in it to *balance all our Griefs*, and therefore to *silence all our Complaints*; a *Man sick of the Palsie*, yet has reason to be *easie*, nay, and to be of *good cheer*, if Christ saith to him, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*; and I am thy *Salvation*.

4. If we have *put our selves under the Divine Protection for the ensuing Night*, we may then *lay us down in Peace*. If by *Faith and Prayer*, we have run into the *Name of the Lord* as our strong Tower, have fled to take shelter under the *Shadow of his Wings*, and made the Lord our Refuge and our Habitation, we may then speak *Peace to our selves*, for God in his Word speaks *Peace to us*. If David has an Eye to the *Cherubims*, between which God is said to dwell, when he saith, Psalm 57. 1. *In the shadow of thy Wings will I make my Refuge*; yet certainly he has an Eye to the *Similitude* Christ makes use of, of a *Hen gathering her Chickens under her Wings*, when he saith, Psalm 91. 4. *He shall cover thee with his Feathers, and under his Wings shalt thou trust*; and the Chickens under the Wings of the Hen are not only *safe*, but *warm and pleas'd*.

5. If we have *cast all our Cares for the Day following upon God*, we may then *lay us down in Peace*. Taking thought for the *Morrow* is the great *Hindrance*

How to Close the Day with God. 115

drance of our Peace in the Night; let us but learn to *live without* disquieting *Care*, and to refer the Issue of all Events to that God who may and can do what he will, and will do what is best for those that love and fear him; *Father thy Will be done*, and then we make our selves easie. Our Saviour presseth this very much upon his Disciples, not to perplex themselves with Thoughts *what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed*, because their heavenly Father knows that they have need of these things, and will see that they be supply'd. Let us therefore ease our selves of this Burthen, by casting it on him *who careth for us*; what need he care, and we care too?

Thirdly, Having laid our selves down in Peace, we must *compose our selves to sleep*. I will lay me down and sleep. The Love of sleep for sleeping sake, is the Character of the *Sluggard*, but as it is Nature's Physick for the recruiting of its weary Powers, it is to be look'd upon as a Mercy equal to that of our Food, and in its season to be receiv'd *with thankfulness*.

And with such Thoughts as these we may go to sleep.

1. What *poor Bodies* are these we carry about with us, that call for Rest and Relief so often, that are so soon tir'd even with doing nothing, or next nothing. 'Tis an Honour to Man above the Beasts, that he is made to go erect, *Os Homini sublime dedit*, 'twas part of the Serpent's Curse, *on thy Belly shalt thou go*; yet we have little reason to boast of this Honour, when we observe how little a while we can *stand upright*, and how soon we are burthen'd with our Honour, and are forc'd to *lye down*. The Powers of the Soul, and the Senses of the Body, are our Honour, but 'tis

116 *How to Close the Day with God.*

'tis *mortifying* to consider, how after a few Hours use they are all *lock'd up* under a total disability of acting, and 'tis necessary they should be so. *Let not the wise Man glory in his Wisdom*, or the *strong Man in his Strength*, since they both lye for a fourth Part of their Time utterly bereft of Strength and Wisdom, and on a level with the weak and foolish.

2. What a *sad thing* is it to be under a Necessity of *losing so much precious time* as we do in sleep : That we should lye so many Hours every four and twenty, in no capacity at all of serving God or our Neighbour, of doing any work of Piety or Charity. Those that consider how short our Time is, and what a great deal of Work we have to do, and how fast the Day of Account hastens on, cannot but grudge to *spend so much time* in sleep, cannot but wish to spend as little as may be in it ; cannot but be quicken'd by it to redeem time when they are awake, and cannot but long to be there where there shall be no need of sleep, but they shall be *as the Angels of God*, and never rest Day or Night from the blessed work of praising God.

3. *What a good Master do we serve*, that allows us *time for sleep*, and furnisheth us with *conveniences for it*, and makes it refreshing and reviving to us ? By this it appears, *the Lord is for the Body*, and it is a good reason why we should present our Bodies to him as *living Sacrifices*, and glorifie him with them. Nay, *sleep* is spoken of as given by Promise to the Saints, *Psalms 127. 2. So he giveth his beloved sleep.* The godly Man hath the Enjoyment of that in a *quiet Resignation*, to God, which the wordly Man labours in vain for, in the *eager pursuit* of the World. What a difference is there between the sleep of a Sinner that is not
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sensible of his being *within a step of Hell*, and the sleep of a *Saint*, that has good hopes, through Grace, of his being *within a step of Heaven*; that's the sleep God gives to his beloved.

4. How *piteous* is the Case of those from whose Eyes sleep departs, through pain of Body, or anguish of Mind, and to whom wearisome Nights are appointed; who, when they lye down, say, *When shall we arise?* And who are thus made a Terror to themselves. It was said, that of all the inhumane Tortures us'd by those whom the French King employ'd to force his Protestant Subjects to renounce their Religion, none prevail'd more, than keeping them by violence long waking. When we find how earnestly Nature craves sleep, and how much it is refresh'd by it, we should think with Compassion of those, who, upon any account, want that and other Comforts which we enjoy, and pray for them.

5. How ungrateful we have been to the God of our Mercies, in suffering sleep, which is so great a support and comfort to us, to be our hindrance in that which is good. As when it has been the Gratification of our Sloth and Laziness, when it has kept us from our Hour of Prayer in the Morning, and dis-fitted us for our Hour of Prayer at Night; or when we have slept unseasonably in the Worship of God; as *Eutychus*, when *Paul* was preaching; and the Disciples, when Christ was in his Agony at Prayer. How justly might we be depriv'd of the Comfort of Sleep, and upbraided with this as the provoking Cause of it? *What! Could ye not watch with me one Hour?* Those that would sleep, and cannot, must think how often they should have kept awake, and would not.

118 *How to Close the Day with God.*

6. *We have now one Day left to live than we had in the Morning: The Thread of Time is winding off apace, its Sands are running down, and, as Time goes, Eternity comes; 'tis hastening on; our Days are swifter than a Weavers Shuttle; which passeth and repasseth in an instant: And what do we of the work of time? What forwardness are we in to give up our Account? O that we could always go to sleep with Death upon our Thoughts, how would it quicken us to improve Time! It would make our sleep not the less desirable, but it would make our Death much the less formidable.*

7. *To thy Glory, O God, I now go to sleep; whether we eat, or drink, yea, or sleep, for that's included in, whatever we do, we must do it to the Glory of God. Why do I go sleep now, but that my Body may be fit to serve my Soul, and able for a while to keep pace with it in the Service of God to Morrow? Thus common Actions, by being directed towards our great End, are done after a godly sort, and abound to our Account: And thus the Advantages we have by them are sanctified to us; To the pure all things are pure; and whether we wake or sleep we live together with Christ, 1 Thess. 5. 10.*

8. *To thy Grace, O God, and to the word of thy Grace I now commend my self. 'Tis good to fall asleep, with a fresh surrender of our whole selves, Body, Soul, and Spirit, to God: Now, Return to God as thy Rest, O my Soul, for he has dealt bountifully with thee; thus we should commit the keeping of our Souls to him, falling asleep as David did, Psalm 31. 5. with, into thy Hands I commit my Spirit; and as Stephen did, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit. Sleep doth not only resemble*

Death,

How to Close the Day with God. 119

Death, but is sometimes an inlet to it; many go to sleep and never wake, but *sleep the sleep of Death*, which is a good reason why we should go to sleep with *dying Thoughts*, and put our selves under the Protection of a *living God*, and then sudden Death will be no surprize to us.

9. *O that when I awake I may be still with God; that the Parenthesis of Sleep, tho' long, may not break off the Thread of my Communion with God, but that as soon as I wake I may resume it. O that when I awake in the Night, I may have my Mind turn'd to good Thoughts, may remember God upon my Bed, who then is at my right Hand, and to whom the Darknes and the Light are both alike; and that I may sweetly meditate upon him in the Night-watches; that thus even that time may be redeem'd, and improv'd to the best Advantage, which otherwise is in danger not only of being lost in vain Thoughts, but mispent in ill ones. O that when I awake in the Morning, my first Thoughts may be of God, that with them my Heart may be season'd for all Day.*

10. *O that I may enter into a better Rest than that which I am now entering upon! The Apostle speaks of a Rest, which we that have believed do enter into, even in this World, as well as of a Rest which in the other World remains for the People of God, Heb. 4. 4, 9. Believers rest from Sin, and the World, they rest in Christ, and in God through Christ; they enjoy a Satisfaction in the Covenant of Grace, and their Interest in that Covenant; this is my Rest for ever, here will I dwell. They enter into this Ark, and there are not only safe, but easie. Now, O that I might enjoy this Rest while I live, and when I die, might enter into something more than Rest, even the Joy of my Lord, a fulness of Joy,*

Fourthly,

120 *How to Close the Day with God.*

Fourthly, We must do all this in a believing Dependence upon God and his Power, Providence and Grace. Therefore I lay me down in Peace, and compose my self to sleep, because thou, Lord, keepest me, and assurest me that thou dost so; Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety. David takes notice of God's compassing his Path, and his lying down, as his observer, Psalm 139. 3. He sees his Eye upon him, when he is retir'd into his Bed-chamber, and none else sees him; when he is in the dark, and none else can see him. Here he takes notice of him, compassing his lying down as his Preserver; and sees his Hand about him, to protect him from Evil, and keep him safe; feels his Hand under him to support him, and to make him easie.

1. It is by the Power of God's Providence that we are kept safe in the Night, and on that Providence we must depend continually. 'Tis he that preserveth Man and Beast, Psalm 36. 6. that upholds all things by the word of his Power. That Death which by Sin enter'd into the World, would soon lay all waste, if God did not shelter his Creatures from its Arrows, which are continually flying about. We cannot but see our selves expos'd in the Night. Our Bodies carry about with them the Seeds of all Diseases; Death is always working in us, a little thing would stop the Circulation either of the Blood or the Breath, and then we are gone; either never wake, or wake under the Arrests of Death. Men by Sin are expos'd to one another; many have been murder'd in their Beds, and many burn'd in their Beds. And our greatest Danger of all is from the Malice of evil Spirits, that go about seeking to devour.

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How to Close the Day with God. 121

We are very unable to help our selves, and our Friends unable to help us ; we are not aware of the Particulars of our Danger, nor can we foresee which way it will arise ; and therefore know not *where* to stand upon our guard ; or if we did, we know not *how*. When *Saul* was asleep, he *lost his Spear and his Cruse of Water*, and might as easily have *lost his Head*, as *Sisera* did when he was *asleep*, by the Hand of a Woman. What poor helpless Creatures are we, and how easily are we overcome when sleep has overcome us ? Our Friends are *asleep* too, and cannot help us. An Illness may seize us in the Night, which if they be call'd up and come to us, they cannot help us against ; the most skilful and tender are *Physicians of no value*.

It is therefore God's Providence that protects us Night after Night, his Care, his Goodness. That was the *Hedge* about *Job*, about him and his House, and all that he had round about, *Job* 1. 10. a Hedge that Satan himself could not break through, nor find a Gap in, tho' he travers'd it round. There is a *special Protection* which God's People are taken under, they are hid in his *Pavilion*, in the secret of his *Tabernacle*, under the Protection of his Promise, *Psalms* 27. 5. they are his own, and dear to him, and he keeps them as the *Apple of his Eye*, *Psalms* 17. 8. He is round about them from henceforth and for ever, as the Mountains are round about *Jerusalem*, *Psalms* 125. 2. He protects their Habitations as he did the Tents of *Israel* in the Wilderness, for he hath promised to create upon every dwelling place of Mount *Zion*, a *Pillar of Cloud* by Day, to shelter from Heat ; and the shining of a flaming Fire by Night, to shelter from Cold, *Isa.* 4. 5. Thus he blesteth the

2 F Habi-

122 *How to Close the Day with God.*

Habitation of the Just, so that no real Evil shall befall it, nor any Plague come nigh it.

This Care of the Divine Providence concerning us and our Families, we are to depend upon, so as to look upon no Provision we make for our own Safety sufficient, without the Blessing of the Divine Providence upon it; *Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain.* Be the House never so well built, the Doors and Windows never so well bar'd, the Servants never so careful, never so watchful, 'tis all to no purpose, unless he that *keeps Israel, and neither slumbers nor sleeps*, undertake for our safety; and if he be thy Protector, at *Destruction and Famine thou shalt laugh, and shalt know that thy Tabernacle is in Peace*, Job 5. 22, 24.

2. It is by the Power of God's Grace that we are enabled to *think our selves safe*, and on that Grace we must continually depend. The fear of Danger, tho' groundless, is as *vexatious* as if it were never so *just*. And therefore to compleat the Mercy of *being made to dwell safely*, 'tis requisite that by the Grace of God we be *deliver'd from our Fears*, (Psalm 34. 4.) as well as from the things themselves that we were afraid of; that *shadows* may not be a Terror to us, no more than *substantial Evils*.

If by the Grace of God we are enabled to *keep Conscience void of Offence*, and still to preserve our Integrity; if *Iniquity* be put far away, and no *wickedness* suffer'd to dwell in our *Tabernacles*, then shall we *lift up our Faces without spot*, we shall be *stedfast*, and shall not need to fear, Job 11. 14, 15. for Fear came in with *Sin*, and goes out with it. If our *Hearts* condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, and Man too, and are made to dwell securely, for we are sure nothing can hurt us

How to Close the Day with God. 123

us but Sin; and whatever doth harm us, Sin is the *Sting* of it; and therefore if Sin be pardon'd and prevented, we need not fear any Trouble.

If by the Grace of God we be enabled to *live by Faith*, that Faith which *sets God always before us*, that Faith which *applies the Promises* to our selves, and puts them in Suit at the Throne of Grace, that Faith which *purifies the Heart*, *overcomes the World*, and *quenbeth* all the fiery Darts of the wicked one, that Faith which *realizeth* unseen things, and is the *Substance* and *Evidence* of them: If we be acted and governed by his Grace, we are *made to dwell safely*, and to bid Defiance to Death it self, and all its Harbingers, and Terrors; *O Death where is thy Sting?* This Faith will not only silence our Fears, but will open our Lips in Holy Triumphs, *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Let us *lie down in Peace and sleep*, not in the Strength of a natural Resolution against Fear, nor merely of rational Arguments against it, tho' they are of good use, but in a Dependance upon the Grace of God to work Faith in us, and to *fulfill in us the work of Faith*. This is going to sleep *like a Christian* under the shadow of God's Wings, going to sleep *in Faith*; and it will be to us a good Earnest of *dying in Faith*; for the same Faith that will carry us chearfully through the *short Death of sleep*, will carry us so through the *long sleep of Death*.

For Application.

First, See how much it is our concern to carry our Religion about with us where ever we go, and to have it always at our right hand; for at every turn we have occasion for it, lying down, rising

124 *How to Close the Day with God.*

up, going out, coming in ; and those are Christians indeed, who confine not their Religion to the *New Moons* and the *Sabbaths*, but bring the Influences of it into all the common Actions and Occurrences of Human Life. We must sit down at our Tables and rise from them, lye down in our Beds, and arise from them, with an Eye to God's Providence, and Promise. Thus we must live a *Life of Communion* with God, even while our Conversation is with the World.

And in order to this, 'tis necessary that we have a living Principle in our Hearts, a Principle of Grace, which, like a *Well of living Water*, may be continually springing up to *Life Eternal*, John 4. 14. 'Tis necessary likewise that we have a watchful Eye upon our Hearts, and keep them with all Diligence, that we set a strict guard upon their Motions, and have our Thoughts more at command than I fear most Christians have. See what need we have of the constant Supplies of Divine Grace, and of a Union with Christ, that by Faith we may partake of the *Root and Fatness of the goodly Olive* continually.

Secondly, See what a hidden Life the Life of good Christians is, and how much it lies from under the Eye and Observation of the World. The most important part of their Business lies between God and their own Souls, in the Frame of their Spirits, and the Workings of their Hearts in their Retirements, which no Eye sees but his that is all Eye. Justly are the Saints call'd God's *hidden ones*, and his Secret is said to be with them, for they have *Meat to eat*, and *Work to do which the World knows not of* ; and Joys, and Griefs, and Cares which a Stranger doth not intermeddle with. Great is the Mystery of serious Godliness.

And

How to Close the Day with God. 125

And this is a good Reason, why we should look upon our selves as *incompetent Judges* one of another, because we know not others Hearts, nor are Witnesses to their Retirements. 'Tis to be *fear'd*, there are many whose Religion lies all *in the outside*, they make a *fair shew in the Flesh*, and perhaps a *great noise*; and yet are Strangers to this *secret Communion* with God, in which consists so much of the *Power of Godliness*. And on the other Hand, 'tis to be *hoped*, there are many who do not distinguish themselves by any thing *observable* in their Profession of Religion, but pass through the World without being *taken notice of*, and yet converse much with God *in Solitude*, and walk with him in the even constant Tenor of a *regular Devotion and Conversation*. *The Kingdom of God comes* not with *Observation*. Many Merchants thrive by a *secret Trade*, that make no bustle in the World. 'Tis fit therefore that every Man's Judgment should proceed from the Lord, who *knows Mens Hearts* and *sees in secret*.

Thirdly, Sees what *Enemies* they are to themselves, that continue under the *Power of a vain and carnal Mind*, and live without God in the World. Multitudes I fear there are, to whom all that has been said of *secret Communion* with God is accounted as a *strange thing*, and they are ready to say of their Ministers when they speak of it, *Do they speak Parables?* They lie down and rise up, go out and come in, in the constant Pursuit either of wordly Profits, or of sensual Pleasures: But God is not in all their Thoughts, not in any of them; they live upon him, and upon the Gifts of his Bounty from Day to Day, but they have no regard to him, never own their Dependance on him, nor are in any Care to secure his Favours.

126 *How to Close the Day with God.*

They that live such a meer *Animal Life* as this, do not only put a great *Contempt upon God*, but do a great deal of *Damage to themselves*; they stand in their own *Light*, and deprive themselves of the most *valuable Comforts* that can be *enjoy'd* on this side *Heaven*. What *Peace* can they have who are not at *Peace with God*? What *Satisfaction* can they take in their *Hopes*, who build them not upon *God the everlasting Foundation*? Or in their *Joys*, who derive them not from him the *Fountain of Life and living Waters*? O that at length they would be wise for themselves, and *remember their Creator, and Benefactor*.

Fourthly, See what easie pleasant Lives the People of God might live, if it were not their own Faults. There are those who fear *God and work Righteousness*, and are accepted of the *Lord*, but go *drooping and disconsolate* from *Day to Day*, are full of *Cares and Fears, and Complaints*, and make themselves always *uneasie*; and 'tis because they do not live that *Life of Delight in God, and Dependance on him*, that they might and should live. *God has effectually provided for their dwelling at Ease*, but they make not use of that *Provision* he has laid up for them.

O that all who appear to be *conscientious*, and are *afraid of Sin*, would appear to be *cheerful*, and *afraid of nothing else*; that all who call *God Father*, and are in care to please him, and keep themselves in his *Love*, would learn to *cast all their other care upon him, and commit their Way to him as to a Father*. *He shall chuse our Inheritance for us*, and knows what is best for us, better than we do for our selves. *Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me*. 'Tis what I have often said, and will abide by, *That a Holy, Heavenly Life spent*
in

How to Close the Day with God. 127

in the Service of God, and in Communion with him, is the most pleasant comfortable Life any Body can live in this World.

Fifthly, See in this, What is the best Preparation we can make for the Changes, that may be before us in our present State; and that is, to keep up a constant Acquaintance and Communion with God, to converse with him daily, and keep up stated Times for calling on him, that so when Trouble comes it may find the Wheels of Prayer a going. And then may we come to God with a humble Boldness and Comfort, and hope to speed when we are in Affliction, if we have been no Strangers to God at other Times, but in our Peace and Prosperity had our Eyes ever towards him.

Even when we arrive to the greatest Degree of Holy Security and Serenity, and lie down most in Peace, yet still we must keep up an Expectation of Trouble in the Flesh; our Ease must be grounded not upon any Stability in the Creature; if it be, we put a cheat upon our selves, and treasure up so much the greater Vexation for our selves. No, it must be built upon the Faithfulness of God, which is unchangeable. Our Master has told us, *In the World you shall have Tribulation*, much Tribulation, count upon it, 'tis only in me that you shall have Peace. But if every Day be to us, as it should be, a Sabbath of Rest in God, and Communion with him, nothing can come amiss to us any Day, be it never so cross.

Sixthly, See in this, What is the best Preparation we can make for the unchangeable World, that is before us. We know God will bring us to Death, and it is our great Concern to get ready for it. It ought to be the Business of every Day, to prepare for our last Day, and what can we do better for our selves in the Prospect of Death, than

128 *How to Close the Day with God.*

than by frequent Retirements for Communion with God, to get more loose from that World which at Death we must *leave*, and better acquainted with that World which at Death we must *remove to*. By going to our Beds as to our Graves, we shall make Death *familiar* to us, and it will become as *easy* to us to *close our Eyes in Peace and die*, as it us'd to be to *close our Eyes in Peace and Sleep*.

We *hope* God will *bring us to Heaven*; and by keeping up daily Communion with God, we grow more and more *meet to partake* of that Inheritance; and have our *Conversation in Heaven*. 'Tis certain, all that will go to Heaven hereafter begin their Heaven now, and have their Hearts there; if we thus *enter into a spiritual Rest* every Night, that will be a Pledge of our blessed Repose in the Embraces of Divine Love, in that World wherein *Day and Night come to an end*, and we shall *not rest Day or Night* from praising him, who is, and will be our *Eternal Rest*.

Mr.

Mr. Flatman's Hymn for the Morning:
Poems, p. 57.

A Wake my Soul ! Awake mine Eyes,
Awake my drowsie Faculties ;
Awake and see the New-born Light,
Spring from the darksom Womb of Night,
Look up and see th' unwearied Sun,
Already has his Race begun ;
The pretty Lark is mounted high,
And sings her Matins in the Sky:
Arise my Soul, and thou my Voice,
In Songs of Praise early rejoyce!
O Great Creator, Heavenly King !
Thy Praises let me ever sing !
Thy Power has made, thy Goodness kept
This fenceless Body while I slept ;
Yet one Day more hast given me,
From all the Powers of Darkness free.
O keep my Heart from Sin secure,
My Life unblameable and pure ;
That when the Last of all my Days is come,
Chearful and fearless I may wait my Doom.

His Anthem for the Evening, p. 58.

Sleep, downy Sleep ! Come close mine Eyes,
Tir'd with beholding Vanities !
Sweet Slumbers, come and chase away,
The Toils and Follies of the Day.
On your soft Bosom will I lie,
Forget the World, and learn to die.

130 *How to Close the Day with God.*

O *Israel's* watchful Shepherd, spread
Tents of Angels round my Bed.
Let not the Spirits of the Air,
While I slumber me ensnare ;
But save thy Suppliant free from Harms,
Clasp'd in thine Everlasting Arms.

Clouds and thick Darkness is thy Throne,
Thy wonderful Pavilion ;
O dart from thence a shining Ray,
And then my Midnight shall be Day :
Thus when the Morn in Crimson drest,
Breaks through the Windows of the *East*,
My Hymns of thankful Praises shall arise,
Like Incense or the Morning Sacrifice.

Mr. Wati's Morning Hymn, *Psalms* 19.
3, 8. & 73. 24, 25. p. 63.

1 **G**OD of the Morning, at whose Voice
The chearful Sun makes hast to rise,
And like a Giant doth rejoyce
To run his Journey through the Skies.

2 From the fair Chambers of the *East*
The Circuit of his Race begins ;
And without Weariness or Rest
Round the whole Earth he flies and shines.

3 O like the Sun may I fulfil
Th' appointed Duties of the Day,
With ready Mind and active Will
March on and keep my heavenly Way.

[4. But

How to Close the Day with God. 131

- [4 But I shall rove and lose the Race,
If God my Sun should disappear,
And leave me in this World's wild Maze
To follow every wand'ring Star.
- 5 Lord, thy Commands are clean and pure,
Inlightning our beclouded Eyes,
Thy Threat'nings just, thy Promise sure
Thy Gospel makes the Simple wise.]
- 6 Give me thy Counsels for my Guide,
And then receive me to thy Bliss;
All my Desires and Hope beside
Are faint and cold, compar'd with this!

*An Evening Hymn, Psal. 4. 8. & 3.
5, 6. & 143. 8.*

- 1 **T**HUS far the Lord has led me on,
Thus far his Power prolongs my Days;
And every Evening shall make known
Some fresh Memorial of his Grace.
- 2 Much of my Time has run to waste,
And I perhaps am near my Home;
But he forgives my Follies past,
He gives me Strength for Days to come.
- 3 I lay my Body down to sleep,
Peace is the Pillow for my Head,
While well appointed Angels keep
Their watchful Stations round my Bed,
- 4 In vain the Sons of Earth or Hell
Tell me a thousand frightful things,

132 *How to Close the Day with God.*

My God in Safety makes me dwell
Beneath the Shadow of his Wings.

[5 Faith in his Name forbids my Fear :
O may thy Presence ne'er depart ;
And in the Morning make me - ar
The Love and Kindness of thy Heart.

6 Thus when the Night of Death shall come,
My Flesh shall rest beneath the Ground,
And wait thy Voice to rouse my Tomb,
With sweet Salvation in the Sound.]

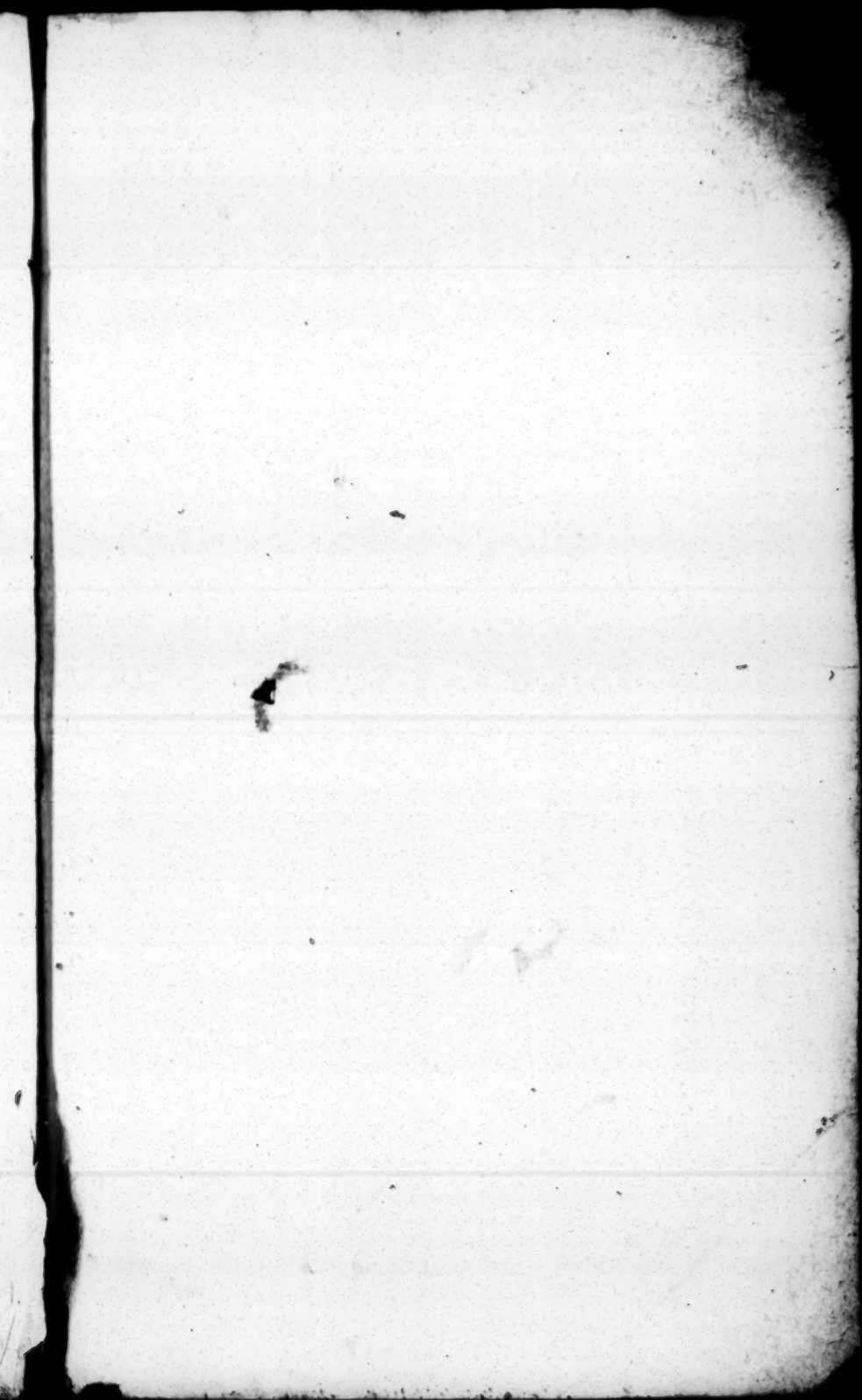
A Song for Morning or Evening ;
Lam, 3. 23. Isa. 45. 7.

1 **M**Y God, how endless is thy Love ?
Thy Gifts are every Evening new,
And Morning Mercies from above,
Gently distil like early Dew.

2 Thou spreadst the Curtains of the Night,
Great Guardian of my sleeping Hours ;
Thy Sovereign Word restores the Light,
And quickens all my drowzy Powers.

3 I yield my Powers to thy Command,
To thee I consecrate my Days ;
Perpetual Blessings from thine Hand
Demand Perpetual Songs of Praise.

F I N I S.



This small present i you give
That you may consider how
So little I am & beggely

2.

John

W

4

2